University of Massachusetts Amherst
ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst

Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014

1-1-1992

The president as administrator : the role of political beliefs in presidential decision making.

David Alan Smailes
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1

Recommended Citation
Smailes, David Alan, "The president as administrator : the role of political beliefs in presidential decision making." (1992). *Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014*. 1837.
https://scholarworks.umass.edu/dissertations_1/1837

This Open Access Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations 1896 - February 2014 by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

31206601358923S

THE PRESIDENT AS ADMINISTRATOR: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL BELIEFS IN PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING

A Dissertation Presented

by

DAVID ALAN SMAILES

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

February 1992

Department of Political Science

© Copyright by David Alan Smailes 1992

All Rights Reserved

THE PRESIDENT AS ADMINISTRATOR: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL BELIEFS IN PRESIDENTIAL DECISION MAKING

A Dissertation Presented

by

DAVID ALAN SMAILES

Approved as to style and content by:

Lewis C. Mainzer, Chair

Patricia L. Sykes, Member

Ronald Pipkin, Member

George Sulzner, Department Head
Political Science

For my parents,

and in loving memory of my grandfather,

John Woods.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the love and support of my parents throughout my graduate career. Their unfailing optimism, their expressions of confidence and their willingness to grant me the opportunity to pursue this degree has been more than any son could ask of a parent.

The chair of this dissertation, Dr. Lewis Mainzer, has been the source of my greatest intellectual challenge in the field of public administration. Moreover, his personal standards of scholarship and ethical principle have set a model of the honorable professional before me, so that I might seek to emulate his dedication through my work. His patience has been a blessing; his gentle prodding even more appreciated. For his contribution to this project and, more important, his contribution to my education, I gratefully extent my appreciation.

Dr. Patricia Lee Sykes has been the ideal "mentor" for any graduate student. As a scholar, she has already demonstrated her ability to think in a clear an original manner; as a teacher, she offered me both an intellectual challenge and a model to follow in the classroom. I hope to be the kind of scholar and teacher Dr. Sykes has

become, and her confidence in my abilities encourages me to strive for the best. I would be remiss if I did not also acknowledge that the early idea for this thesis came from Dr. Sykes, and I believe her freshness and originality will always be a part of me. As a colleague, she has contributed her wonderful support and encouragement, and I can write without exaggeration that I would not be finishing this project today, were it not for her friendship.

Dr. Ronald Pipkin was the first person at the University of Massachusetts to get me to seriously think about the role of ideology in political life. As the chair of the Legal Studies Department, he gave a young(er) Political Science graduate student the opportunity to stretch his intellectual wings by acting as a teaching assistant. When I recognized that an outside reader should be a person in whom one places a great deal of trust, for both the scholastic challenge of a different discipline and as an "outside" gauge of ability, I could think of no better person to call upon than Dr. Pipkin. For his continued support, I thank him.

I have felt particularly blessed in my life to have a number of good friends to lean on, and to support, throughout the past years. At the University, I would especially like to thank Paul Shepard, Leslie Brown, Stephen Pellitier, Marsha Marotta, Glen Ferrara and Beverly Labbee. Of course, all those in the department

who have lent their support and instruction are thanked as well, including Sheldon Goldman, Dean Alfange, John Brigham, Glen Gordon, William Connolly, Jean Elshtain and Nicholas Xenos.

At Mount Holyoke College, I gratefully thank the entire Politics department, but particularly sound a note of gratitude to Dr. Christopher Pyle who, like Ron Pipkin, took a risk by hiring an inexperienced grad student and helped to shape a teacher; Shirley Sudsbury, for her smile each morning in the office and her gentle laugh; and especially Dr. Vincent Ferraro, who made a year as a leave replacement one of the best years of my life.

At Regis College, my new home, I have found the kind of support and encouragement that one only wishes the new job will bring. So many people could be mentioned; I particularly thank Sister Lee Hogan and Dr. Leo Chang, my colleagues in the department; Dr. Edward Mulholland, for his gentle words of wisdom when they have been most needed; Dr. Ernest Collamatti, whose determination to teach me Italian knows no bounds; and Sister Therese Higgins, for her shining example. And, most gratefully, a note of thanks to the Sisters of St. Joseph, for the determination to encourage the best in all our students.

ABSTRACT

THE PRESIDENT AS ADMINISTRATOR:

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL BELIEFS IN PRESIDENTIAL

DECISION MAKING

FEBRUARY 1992

DAVID ALAN SMAILES, B.A., COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Directed by: Professor Lewis C. Mainzer

This research seeks to discover why and how presidents choose their administrative strategies. The hypothesis advanced argues the political beliefs of a president make some administrative strategies more appealing than others.

Chapter One offers a critique of current explanations of presidential behavior, including the "classic" models of the "rational decider" and "personality" models of decision making. A third model, that of "political belief," is described and discussed. The chapter concludes by arguing this belief model can escape the methodological problems plaguing the other "classic" approaches to explaining behavior.

Chapters Two, Three and Four test this model by examining the reorganizational and budget decisions of the Nixon, Carter and Reagan administrations. Chapter Two

demonstrates that Richard Nixon's belief in the individual's power to control one's life best explains his decisions to decentralize government through reorganization and revenue sharing. Chapter Three concludes that Jimmy Carter's belief in a progressive agenda to democratize government best explains his decision to reorganize government from the "bottom-up" and through the use of zero base budgeting. Chapter Four finds that Ronald Reagan's decisions to reorganize the executive branch from "within" and to alter the budget process are best explained by his belief in government as an agent for social change, but only in specific areas of activity.

Chapter Five concludes the research by briefly examining the Bush presidency, and concludes that Bush, like Jimmy Carter, is a president more concerned with "process" than "policy." Each "classic" methodology is demonstrated to be flawed, and the "belief" model is shown to best explain the behavior of each president. For that reason, the project closes, political science underappreciates the role of political belief in decision making.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

DECISION MAKING AND POLITICAL BELIEFS

The choices shaping the federal administrative system constitute one element of presidential decision making. Why and how do presidents choose their administrative strategies? My research will test the hypothesis that the political beliefs of a president make some administrative strategies more appealing than others. By examining the effect of these beliefs on choice,[1] this research will

---

[1]Use of the word "choice" in the statement of my thesis is not meant to imply an endorsement of the "bounded rationality" approach to the study of public administration, as outlined particularly by Herbert Simon, Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organizations (New York: Free Press, 1957). Instead, the term is meant to suggest the attempts presidents must make to organize and prioritize the functions of government. Indeed, as Stephen Skowronek suggests, the period of active "state building" seems to have ended and the modern challenge to administration is the organization of the "hapless giant" of administration and reforms to relieve the "...plight of presidents severely constrained in their leadership by the normal routines of the bureaucratic state." Stephen Skowronek, Building a New American State (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 285-92, esp. 291. While Skowronek's characterization of the administrative apparatus as "confused" and his conclusion that the organization of state power requires an attack on the bureaucracy itself (presenting opportunities to "roll

seek to clarify why specific administrative strategies are chosen, rather than simply describe those choices or analyze their effects.[2]

---

back domestic bureaucratic programs and regulatory activities," essentially the Reagan domestic agenda) may be politically controversial, his reading of the modern executive's task seems accurate.

[2]Clearly, the president is not the sole actor in the administration of government; as Marver Bernstein points out, no single executive can perform all administrative functions. Since Richard Neustadt's seminal work, the political context of presidential control of administration has been more clearly defined. However, the president does act as an "administrator-in-chief," accountable for the action of the whole executive establishment, to some extent (if hardly enough to match traditional public administration hopes), while lacking complete control over its constituent parts. See Marver Bernstein, The Job of the Federal Executive (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1958), 65-68. While Bernstein does describe the influence Congress has over this process, especially when friction over policy develops between the executive and legislative branches, he concludes that reorganization attempts have begun to strengthen the president's ability to direct and control administration (90-110). Emmette Redford and Marlan Blissett describe similar efforts by the Johnson administration in Organizing the Executive Branch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 165-85; Robert Rector and Michael Sanera make the same argument for the Reagan administration in "The Reagan Presidency and Policy Change," Steering the Elephant: How Washington Works, ed. Rector and Sanera (New York: Universe Books, 1987), 328-49. While these efforts do not give the president exclusive political control over the administration of government, the constitutional authority of the office and the techniques of government reorganization can give a president tools with which administration can be directed. John Millett, Government and Public Administration (New York: McGraw -Hill Book Company, 1959), 266-71. As a result, elections may not provide direct popular control over the administration of government but, as Dennis Riley concludes, election results can confirm voter satisfaction and provide legitimacy for administrative decisions while giving some direction to upper-level administrators, including the president. Dennis Riley, Controlling the

To understand more fully one of the primary functions of the presidency, the faithful execution of the laws, it is important to understand why particular methods are chosen for the administration of the laws. Without this appreciation, political science can not explain some uses of the "executive power," and this realm of presidential activity, with far reaching consequences (as recent analyses of administrative reform suggest[3]), is imperfectly understood.[4]

While many studies of the Presidency seek to understand presidential behavior and decision making, none adequately explain what motivates a president to select a particular administrative strategy. Although this thesis offers an explanation, it should begin by separating the scope of its subject matter from other, more systemic

---

Federal Bureaucracy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 24-57 as well as the discussion of power in footnotes 4 and 12 below.

[3]Peri Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 312-16.

[4]For the impact on one aspect of administration, see as an example Terry Moe, "Regulatory Performance and Presidential Administration," American Journal of Political Science 26 (May 1982): 197-224. Obviously, this should not suggest the president exercises sole control over the federal government; the plural sources of power in the federal government have been noted in the literature since the end of the Second World War (see discussion below and footnote 12). My position is simply that the president provides much of the direction for public administration, as note 2 concludes, and especially where comprehensive coordination is required, beyond the perspective fostered normally by the bureaucratic or the congressional committee systems.

examinations of the presidency. For example, the choices of administrative strategy discussed in these pages do not "..constitute metamorphoses of the institution," as Jeffrey Tulis describes his work in The Rhetorical Presidency.[5] Instead, this thesis addresses choices made within a particular institution during a limited scope of time, or "fluctuations" rather than "metamorphoses." To claim more would move this examination beyond the bounds of its subject matter.

Studies that focus on the presidency and administrative power itself offer little guidance for understanding why decisions are made. More recent developments in the investigation of decision making offer little improvement in this area. A brief examination of the traditional study of administrative power and the presidency suggests some reasons for this lack of understanding.

The herald of a renewed examination of the president's exercise in administrative power can be dimly heard in Woodrow Wilson's seminal article, "The Study of Administration." Wilson argued a new study of administrative power was needed, particularly the relationship between politics and administration. In the course of his argument, Wilson claimed some hierarchical control of administration was needed to "straighten" government, and that a

---

[5]Jeffrey Tulis, The Rhetorical Presidency (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 6-9, esp. 7. Nor would I include this study in the list he provides in the notes therein.

"centered and responsible" leadership would be the key to good administration, as it is in business.[6]

Picking up this call at the turn of the century, Frank Goodnow argued politics and administration were, in fact, divisible roles for the government to play when he wrote "..the action of the state as a political entity consists either in operations necessary to the expression of its will, or in operations necessary to the execution of that will."[7] Goodnow went on to identify the expression of will with the legislatures and the execution of will with the executive and judicial branches.[8] The executive was to function as an arm of the legislature, with regard to administration, and the dichotomy between politics and administration would be supported by an independent Civil Service. The scope of decision making would be limited to non-political judgements, therefore, and presidents would carry out, rather than initiate, changes in policy.

Goodnow's description could not survive the Great Depression, however, when such academic distinctions began to dissolve. With that dissolution came a renewed focus on the executive and the political role presidents play in

---

[6]Woodrow Wilson, "The Study of Administration," Political Science Quarterly LVI (Winter 1957): 481-506.
[7]Frank Goodnow, Politics and Administration: A Study in Government (New York: MacMillan Company, 1900), 9.
[8]Goodnow, Politics and Administration, 1900, 23-46, 72-132.

administration. The first work to give public recognition to this role was the Report of the President's Committee on Administrative Management in 1937. The Committee summarized the President's tasks in terms which seem mundane today, but struck early readers as nothing less than revolutionary:

> Our Presidency unites at least three important functions. From one point of view the President is a political leader - leader of a party, leader of Congress, leader of a people. From another point of view he is head of the Nation in the ceremonial sense of the term, the symbol of our American national solidarity. From still another point of view the President is the Chief Executive and administrator within the federal system and service. In many types of governments these duties are divided or only in part combined, but in the United States they have always been united in one and the same person whose duty it is to perform all of these tasks.[9]

The recognition of this political and administrative role is evident in the committee's call for the union of efficient and responsible administration to a democracy through an expansion of presidential authority. The important element in this formulation was the idea of democratic responsibility. The committee observed the

---

[9]President's Committee on Administrative Management, Report of the Committee (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937), 2.

growth of a "..headless 'fourth branch' of the Government, responsible to no one, and impossible of coordination with general politics and work of the Government as determined by the people through their duly elected representatives."[10] By recommending presidential control over that "fourth branch," the committee's recommendations helped recombine (in a more overtly political president) that which Goodnow had separated: politics and administration.

The new recognition of the president as a primary political as well as administrative actor led to a renewed interest in the institution of the presidency. Louis Brownlow, a member of the President's Committee, argued in 1949 that new expectations of the president's abilities to shape politics had ended the politics-administration dichotomy, a theme echoed by Paul Appleby that same year.[11] By the time Harold Stein assembled his policy reader in 1952, the Goodnow distinction was all but pronounced dead and buried.[12]

This renewed interest in the presidency also sparked renewed interest for scholars of public administration in executive control over the bureaucracy. Examinations of

---

[10]President's Committee, Report of the Committee, 31-47, esp. 32.

[11]Louis Brownlow, The President and the Presidency (Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1949), esp. 52-72. Paul Appleby, Policy and Administration (Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1949), 6-15.

[12]Public Administration and Policy Development, ed. Harold Stein (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952), x-xix.

the executive role, such as Chester Barnard's The Functions of the Executive or Phillip Selznick's Leadership in Administration described the personal factors needed to coordinate bureaucratic activity, but made few references to the elements relevant to the decision making process of the individual executive.[13] Organizations are presented as a complex synthesis of physical, biological, personal and social elements in a state of mutual dependence, while the executive is presented as a rather monolithic and uncomplicated coordinator of bureaucratic activity. The executive was recognized as being in charge, but how the executive decides remained largely unexplored.

A more sophisticated understanding of the president's role in administration emerged with the pluralist interpretation of American politics. With the publication of David Truman's The Governmental Process, a new post-World War Two understanding of the presidency recognized the complexity of exercising both formal and informal grants of power in a system of checks and balances and a pluralistic political world. The discussion in both public administration and presidential studies began to move from the formal grants of constitutional power to the politics

---

[13]Chester Barnard, The Functions of the Executive (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938). Phillip Selznick, Leadership in Administration (New York: Harper and Row, 1957). I would also include in this list most traditional examinations of executive behavior, like Alfred Marrow, Behind the Executive Mask (New York: American Management Association, 1964).

of interest group liberalism and the requisite amounts of power exercised by the executive and legislative branches in a system of separated powers.[14] Debates over the merits and dangers of a "strong" versus "weak" president dominated the literature, particularly in the aftermath of the Vietnam War and Watergate. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s

---

[14]The literature on this point is quite lengthy and need not be recounted in detail here; for examples, see James MacGregor Burns, The Deadlock of Democracy (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1963). See also the discussion in footnote 1 above and Louis Fisher, The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981) as well as President and Congress (New York: Free Press, 1972). See also Larry Berman, The New American Presidency (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), esp. 16 for his definition of "constitutional insolvency" and the problem of separation of power. Certainly Congress and the president share administrative power as they share legislative power, as described in Lawrence Chamberlain, The President, Congress and Legislation (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946); Stephen Wayne, The Legislative Presidency (New York: Harper and Row, 1978); Nelson Polsby, Congress and the President (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1976); Harvey C. Mansfield, Sr., Congress Against the President (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975) and Lawrence C. Dodd and Richard L. Schott, Congress and the Administrative State (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979), among others. This relationship has been given the greatest study in the area of foreign policy, as noted by Roger Hilsman, "Congressional-Executive Relations and the Foreign Policy Consensus," American Political Science Review 52 (1978): 725; James Robinson, Congress and Foreign Policy Making (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1976); Thomas M. Franck and Edward Weisband, Foreign Policy by Congress (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979). Additionally, the fragmented nature of power in Congress itself has implications for this relationship. See, for example, Randall Ripley and Grace Franklin, Congress, the Bureaucracy and Public Policy (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1976) and Michael Malbin, Unelected Representatives (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

The Imperial Presidency, like all the literature of this discussion of power, gives an account of the importance of administrative power to this struggle, particularly for shaping the federal bureaucracy, but does little to explain the choices presidents make as they exercise power. Considering the role of political beliefs in shaping strategic choices might suggest that understanding formal and informal grants of power can not explain changes in the institution of the presidency itself or its use of presidential power.

Other, more specific accounts of particular reorganization efforts, such as Redford and Blissert's Organizing the Executive or Richard Nathan's The Plot that Failed, begin with a president's decision to reorganize as a given, without considering why a particular reorganization plan was selected. In this sense, both Blissert and Nathan explain what happened without explaining why, and thus offer no method for anticipating errors of particular choices in the future.[15] The narrow focus of these studies provides an adequate account of the policy process

---

[15]Redford and Blissert, Organizing the Executive Branch, 1981. Richard Nathan, The Plot that Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975). I would include in this list more general works on reorganization, such as Dodd and Schott, Congress and the Administrative State, 1979, and Stephen Hess, Organizing the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976).

and its consequences but an incomplete understanding of the first and crucial step, presidential choice.

More recent analyses of the presidency have begun to integrate the considerations of public administration and presidential studies by examining presidential decision making. But even as these approaches have gained by departing from a too mechanical presidency as a chief element of political understanding, such approaches may have also lost an adequate sense of the president's administrative responsibility and the role of beliefs in shaping that responsibility.

This study will attempt to create a more complete understanding of presidential choices of administrative strategies. As the previous summary suggests, current political science accounts of those choices neglect or assume without closely focusing on the reasons why particular choices are made. This analysis will treat these reasons as a matter of primary concern and will offer an explanation for those decisions. Specifically, my thesis will assess the impact of a president's political beliefs on presidential selection of administrative strategies.[16]

---

[16]The only other study to detail an ideological link between presidents and their decisions is presented by A. James Reichley, "The Conservative Roots of the Nixon, Ford and Reagan Administrations," Political Science Quarterly 96 (Winter 1981-82): 537-50. But Reichley does not consider the selection of strategy, only a conservative approach to certain policy issues. Indeed, Reichley does nothing to discover the importance of this ideological orientation to the choices made in office. Some studies

By examining the role of political beliefs in shaping presidential administrative choices, this study will better explain the reasons for particular choices.

This chapter will describe current understandings of decision making, examining the factors relevant to decisions and paying particular attention to the role of beliefs in the decision making process. To understand political beliefs more completely, the focus of the second half of this chapter will be on the concept of ideology and will offer a research design for better understanding the role of beliefs in decision making.

A. Decision Making and the Role of Political Beliefs

Many political scientists argue that decision making, while often included in broader studies of bureaucracies and their functions, is crucial to political action. Indeed, some contend "..all the other attributes of the administrative process [are] dependent on, interwoven with,

---

have examined the ideology of bureaucrats, however, by comparing the responses of bureaucrats to a set of statements and then categorizing the responses on a "liberal-conservative" scale. The limits and pitfalls of this type of study will be addressed later in the chapter See, for example, Joel Aberbach and Bert Rockman, "Clashing Beliefs Within the Executive Branch: The Nixon Administration Bureaucracy," American Political Science Review LXX (June 1976): 456-68 and, more generally, Hugh Heclo, A Government of Strangers (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977).

and existent for the making of decisions."[17] Executives are decision makers, and while the president is not the sole decider in the political system, the central role of the chief executive does suggest that an examination of presidential decision making will reveal important aspects of the political process. Administrative choices are therefore promising units of study when examining decision making. Since these choices are an important element of the political system, and since recent history suggests presidents are likely to play an increasing role in administrative decisions in the future, this research focuses on presidential selection of administrative strategies.[18]

While the term "strategy" may seem to suggest a series of choices, the term "administrative strategy" is used in the context of this dissertation to note single or multiple decisions seeking to achieve some end result. Specifically, this study examines presidential administrative strategies concerning reorganization of the

---

[17]James McCamy, "Analysis of the Process of Decision Making," Public Administration Review VII (Winter 1947): 41. John Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 7. William Dill, "Administrative Decision Making," Concepts and Issues in Administrative Behavior, eds. Sidney Mailick and Edward Van Ness (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), 30.

[18]James MacGregor Burns, Presidential Government (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 124-36. Herman Finer, The Presidency: Crisis and Regeneration (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 51-55.

executive branch and general budget policy. Both areas are recognized as critical to the exercise of presidential power, and both areas centralize executive power in the president.[19] Understanding the decisions related to reorganization and budget policy seems likely to reveal the important elements of decision making and provide information on the importance of each element to decision making itself.

The study of decision making is extensive, with many studies attempting to "map out" the process for both individual and groups. While group decision making is less relevant to this thesis, even observers of groups argue that group decisions can best be understood as an accumulation of many individual decisions.[20] All define decisions as choices made by individuals or groups in pursuit of some purpose.[21] While many studies outline the

---

[19]Ernest Griffith, The American Presidency: The Dilemmas of Shared Power and Divided Government (New York: New York University Press, 1976), 23-32. John Burke, "The Institutional Presidency," The Presidency and the Political System, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 363. See also Elizabeth Sanders, "The Presidency and the Bureaucratic State," The Presidency and the Political System, 1988, 382-89.

[20]Bruno Leoni, "The Meaning of 'Political' in Political Decisions," Political Studies 3 (October 1957): 232; more generally, see Samuel Kirkpatrick, Dwight Davis and Roby Robinson, "The Process of Political Decision Making in Groups," American Behavioral Scientist 20 (September/October 1976): 33-64.

[21]Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision, 1974, 16.

relevant steps of decision making, nearly all parallel the phases outlined by William Dill: Agenda building (defining goals and tasks for organizations and assigning priorities for their completion), Searching (looking for alternative courses of action and for information which can be used to evaluate them), Commitment (testing proposed "solutions" to choose one for adoption), Implementation (elaborating and clarifying decisions so they can be acted upon), and Evaluation (testing the results of previous choices). Others have noted that the first two steps are the most important for providing direction to decisions.[22] While each step in the decision process has been examined by scholars, action by the president tends to occur in the earlier stages, making them most relevant for study in this project.[23]

Although there is general agreement on the important stages of decision making, there are diverging interpretations of the range of presidential decision making. One interpretation argues presidents play a role in deci-

---

[22]Dill, "Administrative Decision Making," 1962, 34. Irwin Bross, Design for Decision (New York: MacMillan Company, 1953), 19-20.

[23]Theodore Sorensen, Decision Making in the White House (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 18-19; William Colby, "The President and National Security," The American Presidency: Principles and Problems (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 50-51 and Daniel Snowman, "President Truman's Decision to Drop the First Atomic Bomb," Political Studies XIV (October 1966): 365-73 are several examples of the general agreement on the relevant decision making phases.

sion making but the range of their options is severely constrained. In other words, presidents do not really "decide" but rather have decisions shaped for them. For example, Doris Graber argues the nature of information gathering may constrain presidential action, making the collection of data the most important factor for decision making.[24] Similarly, other studies focus on the role of analysts or experts for understanding how objectives are defined and solutions found for problems.[25] Political limits, such as public tolerance, the limits of time or other resources, or even public opinion are also frequently noted as constraints on decision making.[26]

None of these studies claims that these limits on presidential decision making stop presidents from taking action when desired, however. In other words, the constraints noted above are offered as potential, not absolute, limits on presidential action. For example, information is certainly important to making decisions, but executives can find information gathering to be a source of power and not a constraint when acting on a

---

[24]Doris Graber, "Executive Decision Making," Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science 34 (1982): 75-87.
[25]Randall Calvert, "The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice," Journal of Politics 47 (May 1985): 530-55. Arnold Meltsnew, Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy (Berekley: University of California Press), 129-39. Allan Lerner, The Politics of Decision Making: Strategy, Cooperation and Conflict (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976).
[26]The best discussion of these constraints can be found in Sorensen, Decision Making in the White House, 1953, 22-56.

particular problem.[27] Similarly, "experts" frequently give contradictory advice and may provide multiple levels of information rather than speaking with one voice.[28] Even political limits change with time and are different under different circumstances. Thus, while scholars must be mindful of the potential limits on decision making in given situations, none of the limits described above can be seen as a permanent constraint on presidential decision making.

A stronger version of this position is found in the recognition of an "institutional presidency," frequently characterized by the complexity of the executive branch and the divestment of political authority to the bureaucracy.[29] Stephen Hess, in Organizing the Presidency, argues the managerial role of the president is lost in the political complexity of the White House. Specifically, Hess argues the growth of the executive office, the rising influence of staff members and the declining influence of the cabinet, the tension between the president and the bureaucracy, and the role of assistants as "special pleaders" for particular interest groups all combine to

---

[27]Graber, "Executive Decision Making," 80-86.
[28]Meltsner, Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy, 1976, 224-26. See also Louis Koenig, The Chief Executive (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), 335.
[29]One of the best descriptions can be found in Burke, "The Institutional Presidency," 358-64.

limit the role presidents play in decision making.[30] Similarly, Hugh Heclo contends the political ambiguity of elections, the disorganization of a complex executive branch, the divergent loyalties of bureaucrats and the operating realities of a complex nation all combine to limit the effect any executive can have on the political realm, although it may not limit the amount of public attention given to those executives.[31]

While the constraints noted by the "institutional presidency" scholars cannot be ignored, Hess and others have overstated their argument. Rather than limiting all decision making, the institutional constraints of the presidency can be seen as a force in most, but not all, presidential actions. In other words, presidential action is constrained in some areas, but still significant in others. Hess himself acknowledges that presidents do make some (albeit only a few) highly significant political decisions which set national priorities. Among these, Hess writes, are reorganization and budget policy decisions.[32] Thus, while it is foolish to argue presidents can simply pronounce judgements and have the political system respond swiftly and effectively, it is equally erroneous to argue presidents never make important deci-

---

[30]Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 1976, esp. 9-10 and 145-47.
[31]Heclo, A Government of Strangers, 1977, 8-14, 84-88.
[32]Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 1976, 10-11.

sions. Certainly, in the areas of concern for this research, presidential decision making can still be seen as an important activity.

Indeed, the "institutional presidency" position is ultimately undermined by its proponents' acknowledgements of the ability of presidents to change their environments.[33] Most scholars view presidents as possessing a great deal of power in personally organizing their office to control the decision making process. Francis Rourke, for example, argues the "government of strangers" lamented by Heclo can be controlled by presidential action, and that increasing public frustration with bureaucracies will lend even greater support to presidents for reorganization.[34] While each of these scholars acknowledges the political constraints of office, all contend that presidents retain a good deal of latitude in determining their choices.[35] Presidents still decide, although their decisions certainly exist in a political world and are often frustrated by the limits of that world.

---

[33]Heclo, A Government of Strangers, 1977, 177-83. Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 1976, 3.

[34]Francis Rourke, "Grappling With the Bureaucracy," Politics and the Oval Office: Towards Presidential Governance, ed. Arnold Meltsner (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1981), 123-40. Certainly the scholars discussed in the remainder of this section would be included in this group.

[35]Laurence Lynn, Jr., Managing Public Policy (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987), 140-41. See also Sorensen, Decision Making in the White House, 1953, 4-6, 10-11.

Presidential decision making is therefore a significant subject for study, and presidents do, in fact, make important decisions with significant consequences. This discussion, however, still begs the question of why and how presidents make these decisions. The political science literature offers two dominant models of decision making which address this question most directly; a third model will then be offered for consideration. Both models offer more comprehensive methodologies which take into account politics, administration and decision making, and both have become the framework for a series of studies which have adopted these approaches. In that sense, they remain the "classic" explanations of presidential behavior in the political science discipline.

1. The "Rational Decider" Model: Richard Neustadt

The first, and certainly most widely accepted, model of decision making is the "rational decider" model. Many scholars link the development of statistical methodology and the increased use of rationality modeling. With the increasing use of computer technology, the rational model has been applied in the fields of economics, mathematics, and psychology as well as policy studies.[36] In many ways,

---

[36]Bross, Design for Decision, 1953, 2-3. Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision, 1974, 8-9. Bross notes at

rational modeling advocates argue, we are all "rational deciders," acting "..to maximize [our] values under the constraints [we] face."[37]

Given the wide acceptance of the "rational decider" model, a description of its particulars is unnecessary. However, it is useful to keep in mind its broad outline: the model argues agents seek goals and pursue those goals by rational means, so long as what is being sought can be transitively ordered (in other words, goals or preferences can be found). Rational behavior becomes defined as the choice of the goal or preference which will maximize utility or satisfaction of the decider by using a "cost-benefit" analysis mode of decision making, borrowed from economic theory.[38] The model is then tested in the real world by examining the revealed preferences of the decider (by observing the choices that person makes) or by positing preferences for the decider (by proposing a goal and observing if the decider acts in ways to achieve that goal).[39]

Executives play a particularly important role in this process, since they are often the only deciders who have

---

256 that the principle of rational modeling is the basis of all decision making.

[37]Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision, 1974, 8.

[38]William Riker and Peter Ordeshook, An Introduction to Positive Political Theory (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1973) 16-20.

[39]Riker and Ordeshook, An Introduction to Positive Political Theory, 1973, 13-14.

perspectives which reach across an entire organization. Thus, executives can determine goals and best measure potential costs and benefits for each decision alternative.[40] Anthony Downs has applied the "rational decider" model to bureaucratic agencies as well, however, and argues that officials at all levels engage in this form of decision making.[41]

Of course, not all decisions can be freely made. Most "rational decider" models recognize some of the constraints on decision making noted in the previous section: time, information, the number of issues considered, the requisite data required for decision, and uncertainties about alternatives.[42] Even new situations can upset the decider, providing a new problem and requiring reconsideration of all the steps listed above.[43] In such cases, new sciences, chiefly utilizing computer technology, have emerged to help deciders recalculate costs and benefits.[44] Where these technologies are not

---

[40]Bross, Design for Decision, 1953, 260. Riker and Ordeshook, An Introduction to Positive Political Theory, 1973, 75.

[41]Anthony Downs, "A Theory of Bureaucracy," American Economic Review LV (May 1965): 439-46.

[42]Downs, "A Theory of Bureaucracy," 442.

[43]John Ries, Executives in the American Political System (Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1969), 89-90.

[44]Herbert Simon, The Shape of Automation for Men and Management (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 58-76.

available, deciders must learn to "satisfice," finding alternatives that are "good enough."[45]

Although the concept of rational decision making certainly has some validity, the model itself avoids the more difficult issue of preference formation and the shaping of options to be considered. For example, it is easy to understand how a computer can be programmed by a "rational decider" to play checkers or chess, and why such games could be described as exercises in "decision making." However, the model does not explain why one might prefer a game of chess rather than checkers on a particular day. Critics of this model argue that the clarification of values or preferences simply is not addressed by the "rational decider" model and thus these goals are taken as "givens."[46] Simply measuring these values may be difficult, as no single method of assigning value to alternatives is agreed upon by "rational decider" modelers, with each study speaking a very different language from its predecessor.[47]

The result of this problem is a conceptual dilemma for "rational decider" models: since one can rarely measure or determine the values of the decider, one must

---

[45]Herbert Simon, The Sciences of the Artificial (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981), 36.
[46]Harold Lasswell, "Current Studies of the Decision Process: Automation Versus Creativity," Western Political Quarterly VIII (September 1955): 389-91.
[47]Bross, Design for Decision, 1953, 85-98.

look to the outcome of the decision to find the goals and preferences underlying the decision process. However, by taking this step, the modeler creates a self-fulfilling prophecy concerning what has been assumed to be the goals and preferences in existence from the start of the decision process.[48] Far from rational, the preferences of the decision maker may lead her or him to decide to use "irrational" means to some desired end, and the choice of those means may be determined by the end itself, a possibility which is incompatible with the rational decider model. In other words, the definition of the boundaries of "rational" decisions, determined by this assumption from outcomes, places other goals outside the consideration of the observer.[49]

This objection can be most clearly illustrated by examining the first "classic" explanation of presidential behavior offered by presidential studies, Richard Neustadt's Presidential Power. According to Neustadt, the fragmentation and sharing of authority in government forces the president who wishes to be successful to develop the ability to persuade. Unless this ability is developed, affirmative grants of power would be meaningless words on paper. Like the "rational decider" model,

---

[48]Charles Anderson, "The Place of Principles in Policy Analysis," American Political Science Review 73 (September 1979): 712-13.

[49]Leoni, "The Meaning of 'Political' in Political Decisions," 227-28.

Neustadt takes presidential success through legislative and administrative action to be the given objective of presidents and argues the ability to persuade rests on a president's skill at cultivating a professional reputation for being effective and tough, and on a measure of public prestige. Both reputation and prestige can be threatened by the perception of failure or frustration. To avoid this perception, Neustadt believes presidents must make careful, rational choices in applying political persuasion.[50] It is this rational calculation of political costs and benefits to achieve the goal of success that characterizes Neustadt's description of decision making as an example of the "rational decider" model, as well as his more normative recommendations for presidential behavior.

While subsequent chapters will test Neustadt's thesis, it is important to note that Neustadt does not escape the problem of the rational decider model: his theory cannot account for the goals and preferences of individual presidents, and can only assume that the results obtained by presidents were motivated by the goals he posits for them. Later chapters will argue this is not the case at all times, and other goals which seem "irrational" to Neustadt's thesis will seem quite "rational" when considered in light of a president's political beliefs.

---

[50]Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1980), 26-79.

2. The "Personality" Model: James David Barber

A second explanation for presidential behavior can be found in the "cognitive" or "personality" model of decision making. Cognitive theorists generally argue the "rational decider" model ignores the most important element in the decision process: the decision maker. By focusing attention on the individual, cognitive theorists attempt to discover what happens in the mind; the science of psychology therefore becomes the basis for understanding behavior (as economics provided the basis for the "rational decider" model).[51] To do so, cognitive theory argues behavior is linked to a mental process which is not open to direct, conscious experience but must be observed.[52]

Adding to the information and environmental constraints recognized by the previous model, personality is a key factor for understanding decision making, according to this model.[53] Each decision reveals the personality of the decider, and thus each administrative decision "..re-

---

[51]Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision, 1974, 90. D.J. White, Decision Theory (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 10-12.

[52]Steinbruner, The Cybernetic Theory of Decision, 1974, 90-92.

[53]McCamy, "Analysis of the Process of Decision-Making," 44-47.

veals the President as a person."[54] This personality shapes the administrative actions of the president, accounting for various presidential "styles."[55] Understanding the personality of the president, therefore, is the key to understanding how presidents make decisions.

The "classic" study of presidential personality, James David Barber's Presidential Character, best illustrates this understanding of presidential behavior. Although Barber does separate "personality" and "character," his methodology proceeds from the same arguments presented above. Barber argues the president's character shapes performance by interacting with the "rational" side; Barber explains this by applying two baselines for understanding character. The first, "active-passive," refers to the president's use of power; the second, "positive-negative," refers to the president's attitude or perception toward the task of being president. Presidents who enjoy the position they hold and utilize the powers of office to achieve their ends are classified as "active-positives;" those who do not enjoy the office but utilize its powers are "active-negatives;" those who enjoy the office but rarely exercise its powers are "passive-

---

[54]Koenig, The Chief Executive, 1964, 353. Lynn, Managing Public Policy, 1987, 143.

[55]Hess, Organizing the Presidency, 1976, 3. Koenig, The Chief Executive, 1964, 337-42.

positives;" and those who do not enjoy their position and rarely use the powers of office are "passive-negatives."[56]

Although Barber's analysis recognizes the importance of ideology or "world view," it neglects to consider its influence in shaping the direction of presidential action. Instead, Barber uses the single variable of character to explain presidential behavior.[57] While Barber's analysis does move beyond the "rational decider" model by considering why some presidents might choose administrative strategies which seem "irrational" (in terms of maximizing political power), his analysis of character is limited in its explanatory value. Like the "rational decider" model, Barber must extract his account of character from the behavior of the subject, reading into that behavior the type of character Barber wishes to perceive. In this sense, the approach Barber utilizes suffers the same affliction as that of Neustadt: the subject matter of both studies (policy goals, evidence of character) cannot be examined before the behavior takes place but can only be found as being reflected in the behavior observed, opening both to the "bias trap" noted below.[58]

In both models, the explanation for presidential behavior fails to account successfully for the admini-

---

[56]James David Barber, Presidential Character , 3rd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 8-10.
[57]Barber, Presidential Character, 1985, 7.
[58]Heinz Eulau, Politics, Self and Society (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986) 53-56.

strative choices of the executives. Behavioral style alone is not a satisfactory explanatory source for behavior in an area such as politics, as will be even more evident in the following chapters when beliefs are examined. No political leader merely drifts through office totally unaware of the meaning of the experience, the opportunities it presents, or the purposes each leader brings to the task of governing. For that reason, political beliefs are just as significant for explaining the behavior of political leaders, even those who seem clearly pragmatic or, to put it bluntly, opportunistic.

3. Values and Preferences

To understand decision making more fully, one must return to the start of the decision process, the selection of preferences and goals. This is the first step in all decision models and is acknowledged (although then is posited or ignored) by the "rational decider" and "personality" models.[59] All three models acknowledge that individual presidents are the relevant unit of analysis for those wishing to understand presidential behavior.[60]

---

[59]Lasswell, "Current Studies of the Decision Process," 387-89.

[60]Heinz Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics (New York: Random House, 1963), 14-16.

An examination of political beliefs, however, can begin to reconsider the preferences of the decider.

By defining decision making as a question of value allocation, some early scholars attempted to escape the institutional interpretations described earlier and to establish the central role of political beliefs in decision making.[61] The leading figure in this reconsideration of values and beliefs is Harold Lasswell, whose Power and Personality argues the predispositions of the individual decider are critical for understanding decision making.[62] Lasswell argues elsewhere that decision making is, in fact, "participants (with various value perspectives) employing base values by various strategies interacting in an arena to influence outcomes and effects." The importance Lasswell places on understanding these values is clear in a set of questions he offers to elicit information concerning the study of decision making, including the scope of the values of the participants, the objectives sought as a result of those values, and the position of the participant in the social structure.[63] Although the study of decision making is thus less formalized than the "rational decider" and "personality"

---

[61]Eulau, The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics, 1963, 27-29.

[62]Harold Lasswell, Power and Personality (New York: The Viking Press, 1948), 105-7.

[63]Lasswell, "Current Studies of the Decision Process," 382-88.

models, Lasswell suggests more information concerning decision making will be discovered by considering these questions.[64] Similarly, Heinz Eulau argues that while the examination of beliefs may be difficult, they play an important role in decision making.[65]

Although a more complete presentation of this concept will be presented later in this chapter, a better appreciation of the role of political beliefs in decision making would begin to address the limitations of the previous models. By understanding and clarifying the reasons why particular administrative strategies are chosen and the importance of beliefs to that choice, a "belief system" model of analysis would explain the seemingly irrational decisions unaccounted for by the "rational decider" model. The concept of a political belief system could also help to better explain the interaction between personality and environment unappreciated by the "personality" model.[66] But "beliefs" and "ideology" are often used interchangeably, and the relationship between the two concepts is vague. Some clarifi-

---

[64]Lasswell, "Current Studies of the Decision Process," 384-85.

[65]Eulau, Politics, Self and Society, 1986, 72-74.

[66]Lasswell, "Current Studies of the Decision Process," 389-91. Joseph Frankel, The Making of Foreign Policy (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 112.

cation of that relationship is needed before a plan of study based on a "belief system" model can be proposed.[67]

B. Ideology and Beliefs: A Research Design

The study of ideology has undergone a renaissance in recent decades, gaining a place in the language of social science which has given it wide circulation. The term "ideology" finds its roots in the French Revolution, beginning with De Tracey's attempt to define the ideas raised by different revolutionary groups.[68] Most observers credit the Second World War, with its geopolitical conflict between "competing ideologies," with providing an

---

[67]It is possible to propose a fourth decision making model: incrementalism. Indeed, incrementalism is often offered as an alternative to the "rational decider" model, as explained and defended by Charles Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through'," Public Administration Review XIX (Spring 1959): 79-88. Lindblom argues the rational model simply cannot handle value clarification since disagreements on values exist, preferences fail to form and conflicting values cannot be transitively ranked (81-82). While Lindblom's point is well taken, his conception of incrementalism also limits the study of values by arguing those choices are also guided incrementally (83). Thus, Lindblom's model fails to account for decision making by arguing only minor decisions will be needed. Critics point out that while Lindblom's analysis may be adequate for daily administration, its focus cannot explain the type of strategic choices under consideration in this study. See Yehezkel Dror, "Muddling Through - 'Science' or Inertia?" Public Administration Review XXIV (September 1964): 153-57.

[68]Hans Barth, Truth and Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 1.

infusion of vigor to discussions of political beliefs. Recent political "awakenings" of many so-called "Third World" nations, as well as events in the Russian Republics and Eastern Europe, have also increased scholarly interest in the concept of ideology. Although use of the term ideology has moved away from these discussions, as this section will outline, the term itself has gained new substance and is a central part of many political discussions.[69]

All concepts of ideology make some reference to institutions of political action, arguing ideology needs the political system to give ideas reality. Indeed, it was this aspect of ideology (in part) which led Mannheim to differentiate ideology from mere utopian thinking.[70] Not all definitions agree that ideology is important to activity in that political system, however. Understanding the different concepts of ideology helps to explain the relationship between ideology and belief, and the effect of ideas on the political system.

David Minar provides a useful typology for understanding various conceptions of ideology and the literature surrounding the use of this term. Minar himself argues understandings of ideology are needed to explain

---

[69]Walter Carlsnaes, The Concept of Ideology and Political Analysis (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981), 3-11.
[70]Karl Loewenstein, "Political Systems, Ideologies and Institutions: The Problem of Their Circulation," Western Political Quarterly VI (December 1953): 689-706.

the consensus surrounding the political institutions of a given society. Minar's own definition, therefore, shapes the conclusions reached at the end of his essay. However, the typology he presents for understanding the different definitions of ideology offered by social science is not bound by his own definition.[71]

Minar's typology delineates two categories of ideological definition, with an "intermediate" position between the two. The first category includes "macro" definitions, which Minar indirectly describes as beliefs held by an entire political system. In particular, Minar argues ideology as "thought distinguished by its locus" typifies these definitions: concepts of ideology in this category consist of social ideologies, or those beliefs held and shared by an entire society (the "isms").[72]

The second, or "intermediate," category describes ideology as "thought distinguished by its function." Three subsets of this category are offered, each bridging the "macro" theory described above (system wide beliefs) and the "micro" theory described below (individually held beliefs). First, Minar distinguishes "personal-social function" ideologies as those ideas used by an individual

---

[71]David Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," Midwest Journal of Political Science V (November 1961): 318. I describe Minar's categories in different order than his original article, to clarify what he describes as "macro" and "micro" conceptions of ideology.
[72]Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," 325-26.

to rationalize one's life or social role. The second subset is the "organizational function" ideologies, or ideas which connect an organizational pattern of activities. The third and final subset is ideologies which perform a "transmission function" through persuasion and reorientation of thought.[73] Karl Loewenstein argues, for example, that an ideology must be formulated in such a manner as to be communicable to the mass of "power-addressees," accepted by those masses and not confined to a social elite, and oriented toward human values or preferences to create an attachment to these ideas.[74] The "end of ideology" thesis also draws upon this third subset of "transmission," arguing substantive debates between ideologies have ended.[75]

Both categories are encompassed in the traditional literature on the concept of ideology. By tying the definition of the "intermediate" category to that of the "macro" category, Minar opens both definitions to a common critique. This critique was advanced by Karl Marx in his

---

[73]Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," 322-25.
[74]Loewenstein, "Political Systems, Ideologies and Institutions," 691.
[75]Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties (New York: The Free Press, 1965). Others argue this definition of ideology restricts the scope of debate too narrowly, thus defining away much of the current ideological debate. For responses, see the various contributors to The End of Ideology Debate, ed. Chaim Waxman (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968) and Kenneth Minoque, Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985).

discussion of ideology and historical materialism, when Marx argued ideology was nothing more than the "false consciousness" of a society or class. By definition, ideology was associated with error and falsehood, and therefore was not to be taken seriously. These "macro" definitions of ideology (and the "intermediate" concepts associated with them) were mere devices for hiding power behind social beliefs designed to protect the owners of the means of production.[76]

The Marxist critique of the concept of ideology led followers of Marx to dismiss ideology as an unimportant phenomenon, until the evident social power of such ideas began to challenge this conception. An attempt to "rescue" ideology was made by Louis Althusser in For Marx. Althusser reclaimed the use of ideology as an important subject, while redefining ideology to be ideas which are evident to humans, even as those ideas remain imaginary with respect to true knowledge.[77] In other words, Althusser argued a distinction could be clearly drawn between ideology and science, with the former representing disillusion and the latter truth.[78] Antonio Gramsci's

---

[76]For an excellent summary of Marx's critique of ideology and the problems associated with his argument, see Martin Seliger, The Marxist Conception of Ideology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

[77]Louis Althusser, For Marx (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), esp. 229-36.

[78]Mark Cousins and Athar Hussain, "The Question of Ideology: Althusser, Pecheux and Foucault," Power, Action

discussion of ideology followed similar lines. Like Althusser, Gramsci argued ideology was a part of political discourse, but ultimately agreed with Marx and Althusser that ideology was still a class based phenomenon, masking the exercise of power.[79] In the end, Marx, Althusser and Gramsci all agreed ideologies were not an important phenomenon for study, although the use of ideology certainly merited attention.

The first strong challenge to this conception of ideology came from Karl Mannheim at the beginning of this century. Mannheim argued the Marxist interpretation of ideology was oversimplified in its understanding of the relationship between ideology and class. Instead, Mannheim sought to replace this understanding with a conception of a "sociology of knowledge," encompassing the perspective of a subject and identifiable with the social group from which the subject emerged (a process he labeled "particularization").[80] Thus, Mannheim loses none of the social determinism of Marx and yet suggests ideology is not merely a negative denial of truth. Instead, Mann-

---

and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge?, ed. John Law (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), esp. 161-63.

[79]A good discussion of the agreement on this point can be found in Seliger, The Marxist Conception of Ideology, 1977, as well as Stanley Aronowitz, Science as Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), esp. 196.

[80]The best summary of Mannheim on this point can be found in William Connolly, Political Science and Ideology (New York: Atherton Press, 1967), 56-63.

heim's definition argues ideology can be a "positive" force for making social interchange possible. As one observer explained, Mannheim offers a new understanding "..which depicts ideas as causes of human action; which presents beliefs as major, if not the only, factors in social integration."[81]

This "sociology of knowledge" informs most modern uses of the term ideology. But that use, as well as its Marxist roots outlined above, has come under increasing attack by post-modern theorists for its inadequate understanding of power relationships. Leading this attack is Michel Foucault, whose writings challenge traditional definitions of power as located in a particular segment of a society. Foucault most directly challenges Althusser's (and, by implication, Marx and Gramsci) distinction between science and ideology, arguing power which lacks self-conscious activity and located in "discursive practice" has no use for ideology.[82] Foucault's position that power is not "hidden" but, more accurately, dispersed throughout a web of power relationships leads observers to the conclusion that there is no need to "mask" power in the fiction of ideology, and thus the Marxist under-

---

[81]Zygmunt Bauman, Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post- Modernity and Intellectuals (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 107.

[82]John Rajchman, Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 86-88.

standing of power is in error.[83] Ideology, it seems, is a discussion of power which completely misses its intended target.

A methodological problem is also raised by the "macro" concept of ideology which limits its useful application for understanding decision making. Isolating and defining an ideology is difficult since there may be no clear conception of an "ideal type" for the ideology. As Karl Loewenstein observed, "Even the most elementary classification reveals that...most modern ideologies contain elements of collateral, complementary and even antithetical thought and belief patterns."[84] One recent study has attempted to apply this concept of ideology to budgeting and therefore merits closer examination. Steven Koven's Ideological Budgeting: The Influence of Political Philosophy on Public Policy, argues, as this thesis does, that ideology plays a significant role in shaping decision making on budget policy. Koven's definition of ideology, however, is rooted in this "macro" category, which he

---

[83]Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 26; The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 140. See also the discussion throughout Foucault: A Critical Reader, ed. David Couzens Hoy (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), as well as Cousins and Hussain, "The Question of Ideology," 177-79. For a rejoinder, see Charles Lemert and Garth Gillan, Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), esp. 112-14.

[84]Loewenstein, "Political Systems, Ideologies and Institutions," 695.

describes as theories on how power in a society should be organized.[85] Given this definition, Koven goes on to describe ideologies of Nationalism, Communism, Socialism, Capitalism, Fascism and Democracy, each with characteristic social patterns of thought (placing him closer to Mannheim's definition of ideology, although he fails to reflect on the origins of his use of the term).[86] Koven defines the American ideology as Liberalism, and goes on to provide definitions of "liberalism" and "conservatism" within these broader categories. In this sense, Koven moves beyond most studies in this category by taking the "macro" definition of ideology and associating it to the "micro" definition, as described in Minar's "intermediate" category.[87] However, Koven's conclusion returns to the "macro" level by arguing all budgeting is bound to a conception of Liberalism, which finds differing expressions on a liberal-conservative continuum. Koven's definition of these categories, however, remains "time-bound," and his application of the liberal-conservative categories cannot escape some of the methodological problems described later in this section.[88]

---

[85]Stephen Koven, Ideological Budgeting: The Influence of Political Philosophy on Public Policy (New York: Praeger, 1988), 22-25.

[86]Koven, Ideological Budgeting, 1988, 29-51.

[87]Koven, Ideological Budgeting, 1988, 55-83.

[88]Koven, Ideological Budgeting, 1988, 167-68. See also discussion below on the "bias trap" of such categories.

The final category in Minar's typology describes the "micro" theories of ideology, or those defining individually held beliefs. "Micro" theories may not stand separately from discussions of "macro" theory, however, and therefore Minar's categories do not provide safe definitions of ideology. Minar describes these as "thought distinguished by content or structure" and includes two subsets in his discussion of this category. The first subset, theories of "content," includes a personal attachment to some values, particularly as that idea relates to the immediate concern (or "life space") of the individual. Minar points out, however, that these beliefs are shaped by outside forces. Thus, the "micro" level concept of "content" is often (if not always) connected to the "macro" concept of "thought distinguished by its locus." This "content" definition is thus open to the same critique as the "macro" concept, with the associated methodological problems as well.

For example, this "content" definition is the most commonly utilized conception of ideology in American political science, according to Minar, since it includes the liberal-conservative dichotomy used in voter studies.[89] Everett C. Ladd's study of the American polity is a good example of the link between this definition of

---

[89]For an example of this concept of ideology in use, see Angus Campbell, Philip Converse, Warren Miller and Donald Stokes, The American Voter (New York: Wiley, 1960).

ideology and the "macro" theories noted above. Although Ladd defines ideology as an individually held belief, he argues ideology becomes significant only when it is a part of a larger, coherent view of the world.[90] This connection exposes Ladd's definition to the same theoretical and methodological objections noted earlier.

The second subset of this category is "internal structures of thought," or beliefs individually created and maintained by stable, interconnected systems of thought. This subset should be considered separately from the other categories for two reasons. First, the subset does not rely on the "macro" definition of ideology for its substance, thus avoiding the theoretical grounds for criticism already advanced above. Since this definition does not seek to define ideology as a system of thought (necessarily) shared by a society, it considers beliefs from a different perspective which need not provide "true" readings of power. In other words, these beliefs may be wrong, but that error does not invalidate their importance or usefulness in understanding behavior (while the Marxist and Foucaultian critiques of "macro" definitions argue these concepts either mask or miss true power relationships).

---

[90]Everett C. Ladd, The American Polity (New York: W.W. Norton, 1987), 58. See also Philip Converse, "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics," Ideology and Discontent (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 206-61.

Second, the methodology employed by this subset can escape the most difficult methodological problem facing the previously described categories: how can ideological individuals hope to study the phenomenon of ideology without imposing their own ideological beliefs? Karl Mannheim observed this problem from a different perspective in Ideology and Utopia:

> What we are concerned with here is the elemental perplexity of our time, which can be epitomized in the symptomatic question "How is it possible for man to continue to think and live in a time when the problems of ideology and utopia are being radically raised and thought through in all their implications?"[91]

Mannheim argued individuals living in an "ideological age" will find it difficult (if not impossible) to think clearly about ideology. Yet, the concept of ideology is most relevant to social scientists during such ideological ages, as the previous discussion suggested. This paradox troubles Mannheim, and was only resolved by redefining ideology as a "sociology of knowledge." At the same time, Mannheim cannot avoid the charge that such an understanding obscures the power relationships of a society.[92]

---

[91]Karl Mannheim, Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1936), 28.

[92]For a discussion on this point, see Connolly, Political Science and Ideology, 1967, 76-79.

Mannheim's paradox is still a problem for any attempt to understand ideology and beliefs, however, and finds its way into the social scientific application of ideology described by Minar. The paradox ensnares those who attempt to test the existence of ideology through the application of these definitions in the political world. Some refer to this problem as a "bias trap;" Minar describes the problem by arguing

> ...ideology becomes response to an item or set of items selected by the researcher, who must assume that his instrument probes to a basic layer of disposition significantly related to political choice...even with sophistication, the indicators of ideology are evoked responses to artificial stimuli.[93]

In other words, the researcher necessarily shapes the results of the research by defining and applying artificially created categories of belief, no matter how carefully those categories are defined or how precisely they are measured.

How does one escape this "bias trap?" One method is suggested by William Connolly in The Terms of Political Discourse, when he argues observers must take into account the existence of "essentially contested concepts." Connolly argues that scientific application of definitions, a

---

[93]Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," 329.

methodology borrowed from the natural sciences, fails to explain beliefs which carry implicitly held values. When the concept

> ..is appraisive in that the state of affairs it describes is a valued achievement, when the practice described is internally complex in that its characterization involves reference to several dimensions, and when agreed and contested rules of application are relatively open, enabling parties to interpret even those shared rules differently as new and unforeseen situations arise, then the concept in question is an "essentially contested concept."[94]

Connolly observes that politics itself is the "ambiguous and relatively open-ended interaction of persons and groups who share a range of concepts, but share them imperfectly and incompletely." Attempts to apply categories to beliefs, therefore, fail to understand politics and produce "serious misreadings" of these concepts.[95]

If Connolly is indeed correct, one must turn to something other than the broad categories of "macro" understandings of ideology to understand beliefs, since those categories necessarily generalize about these "essentially contested concepts." Indeed, this side of ideology is lost in works utilizing these categories on the "macro,"

---

[94]William Connolly, The Terms of Political Discourse (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1974), 10.
[95]Connolly, The Terms of Political Discourse, 1974, 6.

"intermediate" and "content" levels because the researcher must impose an artificially created category to produce the generalized responses from the observed political subjects. Only the final subset offers a chance to observe these contested concepts as the individual understands them. This, for example, is the error made by Koven in his study of budgets and ideology: Koven can only measure the beliefs which fit within his defined category of Liberalism and, more importantly, the liberal-conservative continuum. Thus, Koven must assume, all liberals believe the same things, as do all conservatives, if one can even begin to explain what those categories mean. As a result, Koven is either forced to place all presidents and other political agents under a single category ("Liberals"), thus failing to distinguish between such diverse presidents as Ronald Reagan and Franklin Roosevelt, or to group presidents into categories which ignore contested concepts within the bounds artificially created by Koven, thus failing to distinguish the "liberal" beliefs of Jimmy Carter from those of Lyndon Johnson (again, assuming these categories can even be defined). As Minar describes above, the result is an artificial response to some artificial stimulus which may bear no relation to the actual beliefs of the individual.

The problem for students of ideology, then, is to find a technique for studying ideology which accounts for these "essentially contested concepts" but escapes the

"bias trap." One important first step might be a more careful reflection on terminology. The word "ideology" is normally associated with a set of beliefs held by a society or segment of a society; all the definitions noted above are in agreement on this point. "Beliefs," on the other hand, are usually associated with individuals and are seen as preceding the formation of ideology.[96] As John Plamenatz explains

> What makes beliefs ideological..is their constituting a system of beliefs which is functional in these ways [holding together groups and justifying their attitudes and characteristics], and is therefore accepted regardless of whether or not its constituent beliefs satisfy the criteria of truth....The set of beliefs need not, and usually is not, a theory.[97]

Thus, the important unit for analysis when attempting to avoid the "bias trap" (as well as the objections raised against the "macro" definitions of ideology) is political beliefs, as defined separately from "ideology." Although the terms are often used as if they were interchangeable, the theoretical and methodological questions raised by each suggest one must take great caution in their use.

---

[96]Eulau, Politics, Self and Society, 1986, 50-51. See also James Borhek and Richard Curtis, A Sociology of Belief (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1975), 3-8. To observe this definition in use, see Louis J. Halle, The Ideological Imagination (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972).
[97]John Plamenatz, Ideology (New York: Praeger, 1970), 31.

The theoretical debate around the true nature of power relationships, and the methodological problem of the "bias trap" are raised by "ideology" but avoided by "beliefs."

This is more evident when one considers the use of this final category, "internal structures of thought," or political beliefs. Robert Lane put this concept into practice in much of his research by arguing the political behavior of an individual comes from within and is associated with belief: "If one knows what ideas will be useful to a man in his time and situation, with his goals and needs, one knows how he will select from among the available alternatives, and in what direction he will strain them."[98] By discovering these ideas, Lane argues, a researcher can better understand the structure of the beliefs held by the subject under observation.

This step alone will not escape the "bias trap," however, since the researcher can still impose a given set of categories on these beliefs. As Lane points out, two techniques can be used to uncover beliefs:

> An outsider cannot see another person's values the way he can see his behavior, but he can find out about them in two ways. One is to observe that person's choice of goals, to see what they have in common...Or one can ask that person to reflect on his own behavior and thought, so that he can say for himself what is worthwhile,

---

[98]Robert Lane, Political Thinking and Consciousness (Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1969), 2.

> what is a value. There is scarcely any other way to find out.[99]

Interestingly, the first option suggested by Lane moves to the "micro" level described in the last category, but may still be vulnerable to the "bias trap" since that observation can be shaped by only the goals for which the researcher is watching (or, to paraphrase Felix Frankfurter, where one goes in determines where one comes out).[100] This, as I argue in the previous section and will demonstrate in this research, is the trap which ensnares the "classic" descriptions of presidential behavior offered by Neustadt and Barber.

The second option proposed by Lane offers greater promise to the researcher seeking to avoid the "bias trap," since the information given to the observer comes from the subject. Although this technique certainly creates more vaguely defined categories of beliefs (or no category at all, theoretically) it does promise to avoid

---

[99]Lane, Political Thinking and Consciousness, 1969, 19.

[100]A useful illustration of this danger can be found in the discussion in William Bluhm, Ideology and Attitudes (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1974), esp. 8-10. Bluhm argues categories may not exist for the elements of an ideology which is very important to the subject of the study. These categories, like the "liberal-conservative" dichotomy noted earlier, come with their own sets of defining political ideas, and thus may either misrepresent or omit other relevant political beliefs. Other examples of this conception in practice can be found in Jerrold Schneider, Ideological Coalitions in Congress (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979) and Gerald Hikel, Beyond the Polls (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1973).

the artificially created observations of the other concepts of ideology. Milton Rokeach offers one technique for discovering such beliefs by carefully uncovering the "belief system" of the subject, defining such systems as "...all the beliefs, sets, expectancies, or hypotheses, conscious and unconscious, that a person at a given time accepts as true of the world he lives in."[101] Rokeach contends individual beliefs can only be linked to behavior through this discovery, although this aspect of belief is generally ignored or presumed.[102]

How can one be sure a "belief system" has been uncovered and understood? The methodology described here does have the difficulty of creating single categories of political beliefs. Rokeach resolves this problem within the context of his discussion by observing that "belief systems" are based upon a set of "primitive beliefs" that can be uncovered by observation. These "primitive beliefs" are characterized by their repetition and the importance assigned to them by the individual.[103] Minar anticipates the nature of this methodology and its limits; his explanation merits lengthy quotation (keeping in mind the use of "ideology" he employs here has been redefined as "beliefs"):

---

[101]Milton Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind (New York: Basic Books, 1960) 33.
[102]Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind, 1960, 18-19.
[103]Rokeach, The Open and Closed Mind, 1960, 40-42.

> Another approach to the study of ideology that may possibly yield some of the relevance of the macro approach and some of the rigor of the micro, proceeds from the study of policy backward through behavior to the ideational antecedents. This appears to be the least cultivated approach to the subject....As people engage in the policy making process, therefore, they are engaging the ideology, if any, which actually preconditions political action. In responses to the policy process, it should be possible to detect ideology that can be defined in specific operational terms and that actually represents beliefs that really will be acted upon in the presence of political stimuli. It may be doubted that ideology is real, or, if real, is very important, unless it can be shown to make a difference where action is involved...The problem of establishing linkage is a difficult one, but in any case the student of the effect of ideology on political behavior must probably be content with demonstrating relationships rather than causes.[104]

This project proposes to utilize this concept of "belief systems" to better understand the role of political beliefs in decision making. By examining the administrative system control decisions of presidents, this study will test the three models of presidential behavior: "rational decider," "personality" and "belief systems." The following three chapters will present accounts of presidential decisions, will examine and evaluate the

---

[104]Minar, "Ideology and Political Behavior," 329-30.

three models using counterfactual arguments, and will conclude that the "belief systems" model provides the best explanation for the decisions under consideration. To maintain a reasonably consistent data base, the decision of each president concerning administrative reorganization and budget policy will be examined. As noted earlier in this chapter, a consensus exists among presidential scholars that these areas are productive subjects for understanding decision making since the president has relatively greater control over the decisions, thus providing the clearest examples of presidential decision making.

Chapter Two will therefore present an account of Richard Nixon's major administrative choices in these areas; Chapter Three will examine Jimmy Carter's choices; Chapter Four considers the choices made by Ronald Reagan. These particular presidents will be examined for several reasons: first, they offer divergent views on the role of government and its relationship to its citizens (and thus disagreement on at least one dimension of political belief); second, they view the goals of administration differently, each offering a comprehensive plan of reform in the course of his term; finally, they provide the most sensible cases for comparison since all shared the political environment of an expanded "administrative state" which has prevailed since the Great Society programs of the Johnson administration (although their differences on

the first and second points reflect their different understandings of that environment).

Each chapter will examine the administrative choices of these presidents by chronologically presenting the major turning points in reorganization and budget policy under each and will utilize a historical approach to describe those choices. Explanations or justifications for administrative actions will be found by examining the primary source material available for each president.[105] By using a chronological approach, these three chapters will provide a neutral structure for a discussion of political beliefs. Each chapter will present the choices of the presidents as a series of conundrums for the discipline's current explanations for behavior. In other words, each example will illustrate why the discipline fails to account adequately for the choices made by each

---

[105]Studies of earlier presidents have had the advantage of full, well-organized archival material. The study of these three presidents has the advantage of contemporary participants and their operating in the modern administrative state, although some of the material related to these activities remains classified or unorganized. The Nixon papers are currently available for research use in Washington, D.C. and include separate material on the reorganization plans, materials related to domestic policy and some of Nixon's personal papers. The Carter library is now open in Georgia and provides some information on Carter's reorganization and budget policies (although the files for the President's Reorganization Project have not yet been organized). The Reagan and Bush presidential materials are, to this date, rather unavailable (although the Reagan library has recently opened), and a greater use of secondary sources in those chapters concerning these presidents is necessary.

president. Each chapter will then offer the "belief systems" model as an explanation for these conundrums: the historical record will be searched to find reflections on the role of the bureaucracy and the duties of the administrative state, as well as expressions of core or "primitive" beliefs which can be used to assemble each president's "belief system." By reconsidering these choices, Chapters Two through Four will demonstrate the role beliefs play in determining the choice of a particular strategy in a manner currently unappreciated by the political science literature.

Chapter Five will conclude by describing how these beliefs can be used to examine other presidents, and a brief examination of George Bush will be offered. Finally, the importance of this new understanding of the role of political beliefs will be described in reference to the analysis presented in this chapter.

Through this exploration, the role of political beliefs in the selection of administrative strategy will be tested and the importance of belief systems to understanding presidential behavior will be explored. By doing so, the analysis will also suggest some of the broader ramifications of beliefs as a force for shaping political action.

CHAPTER II

GOALS AND BELIEFS: THE NIXON PRESIDENCY

Richard Nixon has often been described (and sometimes praised) as the "foreign policy" president; analyses of his administration have often ignored his domestic policy efforts.[1] One recent biographer has claimed that many Americans can recall nothing about the domestic agenda of the Nixon administration, except perhaps the events surrounding the Watergate affair.[2] While foreign policy was certainly the preoccupation of Nixon's first years in office, due largely to the Vietnam War and the initiatives to open relations with China, Nixon recognized that domestic policy was important to a successful presidency, if for no other reason than its implications for conducting foreign policy.[3] While an accurate description of the Nixon administration must therefore begin by noting

---

[1]Paul Light, The President's Agenda (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 47.

[2]Tom Wicker, One of Us (New York: Random House, 1991), xiii-xiv.

[3]Herbert Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 531.

the importance of foreign policy, one should not leap to the conclusion that domestic policy was unimportant to Nixon. Domestic concerns occupied a good deal more time than many observers realize.[4] Nixon was keenly interested in domestic policy, and his activity in the areas of executive reorganization and revenue sharing reflect that interest.[5] Both goals were mutually supportive, and separating the discussion of one subject from the other is rather difficult: without reorganization, revenue sharing would fail to achieve the goal of decentralized government; without revenue sharing, reorganization would lack a guiding rationale. Nixon considered reorganization and revenue sharing a "package," and he pursued both with vigor, albeit with alternating degrees of effort, during his administration.[6] Both reorganization and revenue sharing are best understood as elements in a belief system, held by Nixon, that emphasized individual initiative under a limited government, a government close to the people and, at the same time, ready to exercise federal power. Understanding the relationship between the two policy goals and the role of political beliefs for shaping both is essential for explaining Nixon's behavior. This

---

[4]To this point and echoing Parmet, see Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 414, 539.

[5]John Ehrlichman, Witness to Power (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 207-8.

[6]Ronald Moe, "Traditional Organizational Principles and the Managerial Presidency: From Phoenix to Ashes," Public Administration Review 50 (January/February 1991): 130-31.

section will examine both goals separately, and then consider them as one when evaluating the models of presidential behavior offered in Chapter One.

A. "Centralized" Decentralization: Reorganization

The reorganization of the executive branch was the first major domestic policy initiative of the Nixon administration. Nixon seemed to have high hopes for his Cabinet when he first took office, claiming he had appointed "independent thinkers" to advise him.[7] Nixon planned to keep the number of formal Cabinet meetings to a minimum, but planned to have members act independently within the range of control he established. In a sense, Nixon's plan for his Cabinet seemed almost contradictory, even as he described it in his later memoirs:

> I felt that the better each Cabinet member performed his job, the less time I should have to spend discussing it with him except for major questions of politics or policy.... I had also seen the hazards of appointing Cabinet members who were too strong willed to act as part of a team. I wanted people who would fight for what they

---

[7]Richard Nathan, The Plot That Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1975), 37-8.

> thought was right but would support my decision once it was made.[8]

Nearly all observers of the administration agree Nixon became dissatisfied with his Cabinet rather quickly, as he increasingly felt his new appointees had failed to control their respective bureaucracies and were presiding over departments which were undermining administration policy.[9] However, this feeling did not mean Nixon had misrepresented his plans for the Cabinet. He was apparently quite serious in his intent to utilize his Cabinet, devoting a great deal of time during his transition period to the selection of department secretaries.[10] Had he appointed his Cabinet, planning all the while to ignore their advice, it would seem unlikely that Nixon would have spent so much time and have taken so much care in their selection. A better explanation might be found in some of the changing circumstances of the administration which led Nixon to reconsider his initial Cabinet plan for reorganization.

At the same time Nixon made plans for his new Cabinet, the president announced a clear intention to

---

[8]Richard Nixon, RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 338.

[9]For examples, see Herbert Klein, Making It Perfectly Clear (Garden City: Doubleday and Company. 1980), 300; Ehrlichman, Witness to Power, 1982, 110-11; Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 39-49.

[10]Carl Brauer, Presidential Transitions (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 143-47.

decentralize his administration, on both the federal-state level and within each department. On March 27, 1969, Nixon directed his newly appointed Cabinet secretaries to begin a program of decentralization within their departments, placing decision making as close as possible to those who deliver the services of government to the people. Nixon did not intend to surrender complete control over administration to these deliverers, since decentralization required some centralized body to issue guidelines and perform review functions, as well as guarantee that qualified field officers exist. But Nixon was proposing a more far reaching decentralization of decision making functions than any modern president had ventured to date.[11] By decentralizing the government, Nixon was attempting to increase the political power of the state and local governments to control domestic policy.[12] The Cabinet secretaries, an able and independent lot according to Nixon, would be given decentralized power within the federal executive, and would in turn initiate the decentralization of their own departments.[13] Those Cabinet officers would thus perform

---

[11]Dwight Ink and Alan Dean, "A Concept of Decentralization," Public Administration Review 30 (January/February 1970): 60-61.

[12]David Porter and Eugene Olsen, "Some Critical Issues in Government Centralization and Decentralization," Public Administration Review 36 (January/February, 1976): 76.

[13]William Safire, Before the Fall (New York: Ballantine Books, 1977), 136.

a dual function: as department administrators, they would perform regulatory and review functions (making independence and competence key); as political appointees, they would oversee the decentralization of their own departments. As George Shultz, then serving as Director of OMB, explained in testimony on June 2, 1971:

> A primary objective of the President's Departmental Reorganization Program is to decentralize the authority and related resources to carry out Federal programs. Matched with this, his Revenue Sharing proposals have the objective of returning resources and the control of them directly to state and local governments. Thus, both forms of decentralization are designed to bring government closer to the people. The reorganization does it by shifting control <u>within</u> the federal structure down to the level where the problems exist and where Federal officials can work more meaningfully with State, local and private concerns. Revenue sharing does it by shifting a greater measure of discretion and control from the Federal level to State and local authorities.[14]

As one of the first acts of his administration, Nixon ordered a study of administrative reorganization by a President's Advisory Council on Executive Organization (PACEO) on April 5, 1969. PACEO's mandate was "To review

---

[14]Hearings Before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations, <u>Reorganization of the Executive Departments, Part One</u> (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971), 160.

organization of Executive Branch and its links with state and local governments."[15] Nixon named as chair of the Council Roy Ash, the President of Litton Industries. Nixon had a good deal of confidence in Ash's skills as an industrial management reformer, knowing (and apparently caring) very little about Ash's politics.[16] The number of Ash Council members was deliberately kept low to facilitate speedy action; in addition to Ash, George Baker (dean of the Harvard School of Business), John Connolly (at that time a partner in a prominent Houston Law firm), Frederick Kappel (chair of the ATT Executive Committee) and Richard Paget (a partner in the management consulting firm of Cresap, McCormick and Paget) all served on the Council. To further speed the Council's work, a series of memoranda (rather than a single final report) were issued to the president as the work was completed. In fact, the

---

[15]"To: PACEO Briefing Book Recipients," March 6, 1970. White House Special Files, John D. Ehrlichman, box 32. Nixon Library, 64-11.

[16]Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power (New York: Random House, 1971), 237. In fact, Roy Ash explained in an oral interview that the call came from out of the blue, and that he had only briefly met Nixon, laughing as he explained "..I volunteered for something I wasn't sure what I was volunteering for!" Ash claimed he had only a five minute interview with Nixon before being offered the position. See "Oral Interview with Roy Ash, January 13, 1988," Nixon Presidential Materials Staff, Nixon Library. If Nixon was concerned about the outcome of the Council's study, or wished to direct that outcome toward an administrative "coup," one must conclude his method of selecting Ash was foolhardy at best.

Council planned to work so quickly that they intended to be "out of business by December, 1970."[17]

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the Ash Council was the amount of time Nixon devoted to reorganization discussions: Nixon gave the Council a good deal of access and attention, although he was personally bored by the details of reorganization planning.[18] The Council worked for eight months, interviewing past and present officials in the Executive Office of the President and the executive branch, outside experts on administrative organizations and industrial managers, and by reviewing past reorganization studies.[19] At its peak, the Council employed some 47 staff members[20] and, after facing some immediate start-up problems, had prepared a number of reports for the president by mid-1970.[21]

The Council's reports to the president reflected the perception of many executive branch observers that there

---

[17]"To: PACEO Briefing Book Recipients," 64-12. In fact, the Council continued to work until mid- 1971, although it did product the first reorganization plan in mid-1970 as promised. See memorandum from Water Thayer to Ron Zeigler, "Summation of PACEO Council Agenda," September 10, 1969, White House Central Files, Staff Member and Office Files, PACEO, Box 6, Nixon Library.

[18]Peri Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 277, 280-82; Evans and Novak, Nixon in the White House, 1971, 238.

[19]"Reorganization Plan of 1970," Public Administration Review 30 (November/December 1970): 617.

[20]Roy Ash (testimony June 2, 1971), "Reorganization of Executive Departments," 167.

[21]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 278-79.

existed a greater need for coherence and organization in domestic policy planning.[22] In a cover letter to Nixon accompanying its first set of reorganization proposals, the Council noted that reorganization of the Executive Office was a necessary first step before any other reforms could be contemplated, explaining "It is a question of putting the horse before the cart. The organization of the Executive Office is crucial to the effectiveness of the other changes we will propose."[23] The Ash Council proposed in its first set of reorganization plans the formation of a Domestic Council, resembling the National Security Council, to aid the President in the formulation of domestic policy. The Council would include the president, Vice President, Attorney General, and the Secretaries of Treasury, Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, HEW, HUD and Transportation. The Ash Council also recommended the restructuring and renaming of the Bureau of the Budget into a new Office of Management and Budget.[24]

---

[22]William Carey, "Presidential Staffing in the Sixties and Seventies," Public Administration Review XXIX (September/October 1969): 457-58 broadly reflects this perception even before the Ash Council began its most serious work.

[23]"Memoranda for the President," July 19, 1969, White House Central File, Staff Member and Office Files, President's Advisory Council on Executive Organization (PACEO), Box 1, Nixon Library.

[24]Cabinets and Counselors: The President and the Executive Branch (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989), 40.

Notes taken during one of the Ash Council's early meetings with Nixon and his immediate White House staff indicate Nixon gave the new reorganization plan high priority, recognizing the need to move quickly if the Council's recommendations were to be adopted.[25] These notes, taken at the August 20, 1969 meeting at San Clemente, captured the President's reactions to the first set of Ash Council recommendations. In addition to the Council members, the President, Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Kissinger and Flanigan were all in attendance. Nixon seemed most concerned about the need to make change possible, even when the White House has a vested interest in keeping what had been created in previous administrations. He seemed particularly concerned that members of the Cabinet would become captive and would be unable to evaluate their department's programs.[26] At the same time,

---

[25]"Memorandum for the President," Reports and Papers, Council Meeting August 20, 1969. File [6-1], White House Central Files, PACEO, Nixon Library. The notes referred to in the following paragraph were written onto the document by an unnamed person. Since the notes appear on the PACEO copy and that copy was retained for PACEO's official file of the meeting, I am assuming the notes are accurate. A cover letter accompanying those notes and authored by Andrew Rouse, the Deputy Executive Director at PACEO, summarizes these handwritten notes and uses them to create a set of recommendations for revisions. It is therefore clear Rouse considers them accurate and authoritative representations of the President's wishes. Although it is somewhat difficult to tell, the handwriting does appear to be that of Rouse, who is also listed as being present at the meeting.

[26]"Memorandum for the President," handwritten notes on front and reverse of page five.

the Report clearly delineated the dangers of allowing the staff to control too much, arguing "A President whose office lacks these [well-organized systems of information] will necessarily be less inclined toward delegation and, will try by default, to retain in his control operating responsibilities he cannot possibly handle." On that same page, handwritten notes indicate Nixon recognized the need for such an information system.[27]

While reorganization was later perceived as a method for replacing Nixon's discredited (in his view) Cabinet, one would be mistaken to assume reorganization was merely a method for avoiding recalcitrant Cabinet secretaries. Had Nixon's original intentions for his Cabinet come to fruition, it is clear the Ash Council's recommendations for coordinating the White House would still be considered necessary. In the course of the August 20 meeting, Nixon also made it clear that the proposal would have to be "sold" to the Cabinet, suggesting the president recognized the importance of keeping the Cabinet together through the transition. At the same time, according to handwritten notes of the meeting, Nixon insisted on keeping the report "where it is - if this report gets beyond this room, we're in trouble."[28] The central concern for the reorganization was the patchwork system of exercising executive power in domestic affairs: Nixon sought to coordinate all domestic

---

[27]"Memorandum for the President," 6

[28]"Memorandum for the President," 8 and reverse of 7.

policy activity, not control the Cabinet officers.[29] In hindsight, it may appear the changes were used as a means to a nefarious concentration of power. The first round of reorganization is often perceived as a carefully constructed and well planned prelude to the second set of reorganization proposals. At the time, however, changes in the staff system were judged necessary simply because Nixon believed that an efficient staff was needed if the Cabinet itself was to have any hope of running well.[30] Additionally, the general need to concentrate power in the hands of the Cabinet was perceived as equally crucial to the overall goal of decentralization. If the Cabinet lacked the authority or ability to act with resolve, decentralization would be impossible.[31]

In fact, the idea of a Domestic Council was hardly original; the Ash Council had essentially modified a proposal Richard Goodwin had made to Lyndon Johnson in 1964.[32] Ash himself admitted their work was guided by earlier studies (including the Hoover Commission, the Rockefeller Committee, the Price Task Force, the Heineman

---

[29]William Carey,"Presidential Staffing in the Sixties and Seventies," 457-58.

[30]Joan Hoff-Wilson, "Richard M. Nixon: The Corporate Presidency," Leadership in the Modern Presidency, ed. Fred Greenstein (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 172.

[31]See Dwight Ink's comments in "President Nixon's Proposals for Executive Reorganization: A Mini-Symposium," Public Administration Review 34 (September/October 1974): 488.

[32]Cabinets and Counselors, 1989, 40.

Task Force and the Lindsay Task Force[33]), not new orders from Nixon or any other member of the administration to consolidate power:

> In working through those [reorganization recommendations of previous presidential commissions] I saw a lot of good ideas and decided our job was not to come up with a lot of new ideas. All the good ideas were already out there. We defined our mission as getting something done, not just making another report, throwing it in, and seeing if somebody wants to do something about it some day. So we modified some of the previous ideas slightly, but we worked basically from the work that had gone on since Roosevelt's time.[34]

Despite later analyses, it seems clear Nixon's Domestic Council was to supplement and correct Cabinet action, not the first step toward replacing the Cabinet with a new executive authority.

Nixon transmitted the proposal to Congress on March 12, 1970, claiming that the Domestic Council would begin to control the large federal bureaucracy and help him decide what to do, while the Office of Management and Budget would help determine how and how well those tasks were being performed.[35] In Nixon's own words:

---

[33]Roy Ash (testimony June 2, 1971) "Reorganization of Executive Departments," 186.
[34]"Oral Interview with Roy Ash," 4-5.
[35]"Reorganization Plan of 1970," 612.

> A President whose programs are carefully coordinated, whose information system keeps him adequately informed, and whose organizational assignments are plainly set out, can delegate authority with security and confidence. A president whose office is deficient in these respects will be inclined, instead, to retain close control of operating responsibilities which he cannot and should not handle.[36]

Although Congress was leery of the reorganization proposal, John Connolly (a member of the Ash Council) was able to help ease its passage. The congressional debate was surprisingly brief and without serious disagreement from either party;[37] approval came from the House and Senate on May 13 and 16, respectively.

Nixon was lucky to gain approval of the first round of reorganization proposals: 1970 was a bad year for Nixon's legislative initiatives. Although Nixon had a "rocky" relationship with Congress throughout his presidency, he was frequently successful at putting together coalitions of votes during his first two years.[38] However, this should not obscure the fact that Nixon took a tremendous political risk in pressing the reorganization plans for the Domestic Council. As William Carey explains,

---

[36]"Reorganization Plan of 1970," 612.
[37]Evans and Novak, Nixon in the White House, 1971, 240-41.
[38]Brauer, Presidential Transitions, 1986, 158-59.

> [The Domestic Council reorganization] has the merit of ending a prolonged and costly inertia in the development of the presidential office. Movement was needed - needed badly. Most Presidents would have hesitated to act at a time like this - the country divided, the presidency in deep trouble, the opposing party in control of Congress. Not many Presidents would have risked it, and I suspect that in the test hours before the House voted, some of Mr. Nixon's counsellors may have regretted their rashness. But he did it, and made it stick.[39]

But the administration found the bad showing in the fall mid-term elections had begun to erode the fragile coalition of moderate Democrats and reformist Republicans that had been crucial to early legislative successes .[40] The general shakeups from reorganization had already begun to alter bureaucratic control over the federal government from the top, while revenue sharing (as will be noted in the next section) threatened to alter bureaucratic and congressional control at the bottom. In other words, at the same moment that members of Congress began to realize the extent to which their control over spending would be limited by the changes Nixon proposed, the administration

---

[39]William Carey, "Reorganization Plan No. 2," Public Administration Review 30 (November/December 1970): 631.
[40]Dan Rather and Gary Paul Gates, The Palace Guard (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 269-70; A. James Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1981), 97; Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 7.

began the next serious attempt to alter bureaucratic arrangements.[41] Nixon clearly had Congress in mind when formulating the first reorganization effort, whose passage he barely managed to secure, and Congress was not intending to allow more control to be taken by the administration.

The 1971 State of the Union address also contained a second round of reorganization proposals created by the Ash Council. Six Cabinet positions were to be reorganized into four new "superagencies" (the Departments of Community Development, Human Resources, Natural Resources and Economic Affairs), intended to combine disparate agencies around commonly held objectives. The Department of Community Development (DCD) was to absorb most elements of HUD, the Highway and Mass Transportation sections of the Department of Transportation, the Community Action Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Farmer's Home Administration and the Rural Electrification Program. These programs were to be decentralized into subregional offices, providing the greatest amount of control for policy in each region. The Department of Human Resources

---

[41]Matthew Crenson and Francis Rourke, "By Way of Conclusion: American Bureaucracy Since World War II," The New American State, ed. Louis Galambos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1987), 160; William Gormley, Taming the Bureaucrats (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 176-77; Ray Price, With Nixon (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 197; Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 31, 74-75.

(DHR) combined the remaining parts of HUD, the Unemployment Services and Compensation functions of the Department of Labor, and several offices of OEO. While these programs would still be centralized in Washington, their budgets would be the targets of the greatest amount of revenue sharing changes, giving a great deal of autonomy to regional managers outside Washington for budgetary control and policy administration. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) united the Department of the Interior, NOAA from the Department of Commerce, the Forest Service and the planning departments of the Army Corps of Engineers. While these agencies were already largely decentralized into field offices, the reorganization plan called for the additional creation of new offices to further decentralize administration. Finally, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) would take the leftover functions of the Departments of Transportation, Commerce and Labor as well as the Small Business Association and the Office of Technical Utilization in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. The plan called for the current number of field offices to be maintained to administer programs which were already decentralized.[42]

---

[42]Douglas Fox, "The President's Proposals for Executive Reorganization: A Critique," Public Administration Quarterly 33 (September/October 1973): 401-2.

The reluctance of Congress and the bureaucracy to support the Nixon reorganization initiatives (and the revenue sharing proposal discussed in the next section), argues Richard Nathan, led to the development of the now-famous "administrative presidency," where bureaucratic functions were assumed by the White House counter-bureaucracy until the details of governing simply overwhelmed the comparatively small White House staff.[43] Nathan is not entirely certain when this takeover occurred; his preface names either 1971 or 1972, which could indicate either the early or later reorganization initiative.[44]

Nathan accurately describes the changing nature of administrative power in the Nixon administration and generally seems sympathetic to Nixon's reforms. One must doubt, however, Nathan's conclusion that Nixon's administrative "coup" represented a devious act, as Nathan seems to imply. Other scholars of reorganization plans noted even before the Ash Council began its deliberations that securing agency cooperation (and with it, congressional approval) in reorganization would be difficult.[45] Nathan himself acknowledged rather casually that the "super-agency" concept was simply the fulfillment of the original

---

[43]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 51-53.
[44]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, vii.
[45]"What, Another Hoover Commission?" Public Administration Review XXVIII (March/April 1968): 170-71.

Ash Council recommendations.[46] Nixon's own attitude leans toward placing the blame for reorganization resistance on the Cabinet and not on bureaucrats as a whole. As he noted in his autobiography later, bureaucrats need direction which "captured" Cabinet officers cannot provide.[47] Nixon did not mask his agreement with that belief, announcing even as early as March 14, 1969 that he planned to move reluctant holdovers from office as soon as possible, long before Nathan ascribes that motive to Nixon only after the 1970-71 legislative failures.[48]

The irony of Nixon's reorganization effort lies in the fact that many considered the plan too quick to give up power, rather than finding its essence in the consolidation of power in the White House.[49] In fact, the greater irony, as Peri Arnold points out, is that "Nixon failed in further centralizing executive branch organization because government was not centralized enough to give him adequate political leverage to accomplish that end."[50] Critics of the plan argued that the reorganization effort created too many changes too quickly. Editorialists throughout the country concentrated on the

---

[46]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 68-69.
[47]Richard Nixon, In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat and Renewal (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 279-80.
[48]Nixon: The First Year of His Presidency (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1970), 16-A.
[49]See, for example, Roy Ash's testimony in "Reorganization of Executive Departments," 190-91.
[50]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 301.

political difficulties of passing such a wide sweeping alteration of bureaucratic responsibility, but they placed the blame for these difficulties on Congress, not the president. Indeed, most editorialists argued that the "superagency" proposal was an idea long overdue.[51] Reviewing the plan in 1973, Douglas Fox argued that the decentralizing effect of the plan would lessen the power of the new department secretaries rather than increasing their power to coordinate policy, making the overall effect of decentralization a loss of administrative efficiency and not an improvement. By turning power over to state administrators in some cases, or field offices in others, Fox noted secretaries would simply lose the ability to exercise administrative control. Administration defenders also noted that the effort would lead to less, not more, control over the functions of government; of course, they argued, that was what was intended from the beginning.[52] Long after leaving the White House, John Ehrlichman claimed the reorganization efforts were an effort to strengthen the Cabinet so that decentralization could take place. Unless power was wrested from those who had traditionally held government in place, no decentrali-

---

[51]See, for example, editorials from the Charlotte Observer (January 26, 1971), Salt Lake Tribune (January 24, 1971), St. Louis Dispatch (January 24, 1971) and the Dallas Morning News (January 26, 1971) in Editorials on File 2 (January 16-31, 1971): 76-81.

[52]Price, With Nixon, 1977, 196-97.

zation plan could succeed. Ehrlichman even suggests in his account of the Nixon years that the expansion of the White House staff duties was a desperate last resort, not part of a general, preconceived plot to take power.[53]

Without question, the simultaneous centralization and decentralization of government accounts for much of the confusion surrounding Nixon's reorganization proposals.[54] As Nathan himself explained in 1975, Nixon's fundamental aim was decentralization:

> Despite the fact that both decentralizing and centralizing proposals were part of the Nixon program, the important direction of change was decentralization. Coming at the end of a 30-year period in which the predominate trend of domestic policy had been to increase the responsibility of the national government, Nixon's program marked an important shift.[55]

By the time these proposals were made, however, Nixon was struggling to pass even modest revenue sharing reforms. The widespread reaction to a second round of reorganization was negative and the proposals were given little chance of passage.[56] Instead, Nixon concentrated his

---

[53]Ehrlichman, Witness to Power, 1982, 210-12.
[54]Evans and Novak, Nixon in the White House, 1971, 241-43.
[55]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 22-23.
[56]Richard Nathan, Allen Manvel and Susannah Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1975), 59-69.

political efforts on passing revenue sharing. Reorganization would have to take place through different means.

Nixon considered altering his reorganization strategy from legislative initiatives to one of reform from within: after the 1972 election, a general shakeup of the Cabinet took place. Nixon had found that he could not rely on his earlier appointees to follow his orders to replace Democratic holdovers who were hostile to the administration and its initiatives. Understood in the context of "protecting turf" rather than political hostility, Nixon's comments in his later autobiographical account of the Cabinet shakeup become clear: "I could only console myself with the determination that...I would not make the same mistake of leaving the initiative [to control individual departments and force change] to individual Cabinet members."[57] The administration made some ambiguous attempts at subjecting new appointees to political loyalty tests. The ambiguity can be explained, at least in part, by Nixon's early antipathy to loyalty tests and his surprisingly lackadaisical attitude toward the political loyalty of the early appointees.[58] Appointees with little political experience were chosen, and Nixon increasingly chose individuals with no independent public standing of their own, reducing the chance the appointee would feel loyal to some interest or group whose political support

---

[57]Nixon, RN, 1990, 355-56.
[58]Cabinets and Counselors, 1989, 28.

had helped secure the position. Loyalty was stressed, but the execution of orders was valued above personal or political fidelity. Nixon's clear goal was to have an executive branch responsive to the president's will, not a mere mirror image of himself.[59] Thus, Nixon turned to the politically costly alternative of the "administrative presidency" as the "superagency" reforms quietly died in committee.[60] Both the "superagency" and politicization strategies came to a halt, however, as the White House became preoccupied with the Watergate scandal.[61]

B. "Centralized" Decentralization: Budget

The second major domestic policy initiative in the administration's first years was revenue sharing. Although Nixon spent little time on domestic policy, revenue sharing was the single new budgetary initiative (aside from reorganization of OMB) Nixon pursued.[62] The concept

---

[59]Nelson Polsby, "Presidential Cabinet Making: Lessons for the Political System," Political Science Quarterly 93 (Spring, 1978): 16-17.

[60]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 299.

[61]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 65-67; Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 244-45.

[62]Tom Wicker uses revenue sharing as a prime example of the misinterpretation of the priority given to domestic policy by Nixon; while revenue sharing was certainly never as important to Nixon as winning the war in Vietnam, Wicker argues it would be a mistake to conclude Nixon was not concerned with domestic issues. War, according to

of revenue sharing was important to Nixon, and had been very much on his mind during the 1968 campaign.[63] Revenue sharing was the centerpiece of Nixon's concept of "New Federalism," a more general plan to complete the overall plan of decentralization.[64] New Federalism was to sort out responsibility for domestic action. Like reorganization, it consisted of a variety of plans to centralize and decentralize elements of the budget, both between the federal and state governments and within individual departments. Services delivered to communities were targeted to be decentralized, while certain elements of the domestic agenda would remain in federal control.[65]

Nixon planned to use revenue sharing to accomplish the first element of New Federalism.[66] Like the concept of a Domestic Council, revenue sharing had first been proposed during the Johnson Administration. The National Governor's Conference called for revenue sharing in 1966, followed by the recommendation of revenue sharing by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1967 and the National Commission on Urban Problems in 1968.[67]

Wicker, hides the relative importance of domestic policy to a president. See Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 412.

[63]Richard Whalen, Catch the Falling Flag (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 38-39.

[64]Safire, Before the Fall,1977, 275-76.

[65]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 18-19.

[66]Nixon: The First Year of His Presidency, 1970, 66.

[67]Nathan, Manvel, and Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing, 1975, 14.

Nixon announced his intentions for the general revernue sharing program on August 8, 1969, stressing its importance for his overall plan to decentralize government. The original proposal was quite modest, asking for only $500 million to be returned in 1971, but Nixon planned to raise the stakes to $5 billion by 1975.[68] The modesty of Nixon's original proposal belied its explosive political effect. Nixon knew that even a slight restructuring of the normal budgetary relationship between the federal government and the states would be met with resistance by those who traditionally controlled such power. Indeed, the response from Congress was swift. House Ways and Means Chair Wilbur Mills was particularly adamant in his opposition to the proposal, recognizing its potential and arguing the bill meant money would be funnelled to larger states who had the least need for new funds.[69] He refused to schedule hearings on the bill during the 91st Congress.[70] Nixon stood his political ground, however, and was unwilling to surrender his efforts to have revenue sharing enacted.[71] Indeed, Nixon devoted a great deal of time to revenue sharing, demon-

---

[68]Nathan, Manvel and Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing, 1975, 15-16.

[69]Jerry Voorhis, The Strange Case of Richard Milhous Nixon (New York: Paul S. Eriksson, Inc., 1972), 132-34.

[70]Nathan, Manvel and Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing, 1975, 16.

[71]The Nixon Presidential Press Conferences (London: Heyden Press, 1978), 251-252.

strating an uncharacteristic interest in the complexities of domestic legislative initiatives. He enthusiastically lobbied Congress for passage and, later, reconsideration. John Ehrlichman noted that Nixon "involved himself frequently" in the legislative battle, something Nixon often declined to do and found personally distasteful (Nixon disliked, in his own words, the "buddy-buddy" wheeling and dealing of the legislative process[72]). But Ehrlichman reports that Nixon made himself available "virtually on request" where revenue sharing was concerned, making it "a personal issue."[73] While those initial efforts were frustrated by Mills, Nixon's initiative gained widespread support among local government officials (understandably) and a groundswell of support for the concept of revenue sharing began to build.[74]

In some ways, Mills's obstinacy actually worked to the advantage of the Nixon administration. By delaying action on the proposal until the next congress, Mills gave Nixon enough time to persuade the public to the necessity for decentralization through revenue-sharing. Nixon spent a great deal of time developing the details of the revenue sharing proposal, making it his top domestic policy issue in 1970 and 1971 and ordering the Treasury Department to

---

[72]Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 205-6.
[73]Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 527.
[74]Paul Dommel, The Politics of Revenue Sharing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974), 91-93.

release a large amount of information documenting some of the details of the new bill to the public.[75] Revenue sharing became the centerpiece of Nixon's State of the Union address in January 1971. The speech was unusual in that it did not mention foreign policy (even as the Vietnam War raged) and focused on Nixon's plan to change the national-state-local government balance of power. Earlier in the winter, and throughout the spring of 1971, Nixon devoted an uncharacteristically large amount of time to lobbying Congress, laying the groundwork for a new legislative initiative on revenue sharing.[76] By June, the Administration had proposed an even larger revenue sharing bill, and Mills had little choice but to reverse his earlier opposition.

Mills began hearings on the Administration bill on June 2, 1971, but only on the condition that his own version of revenue sharing was considered as an alternative. A bill introduced by Russel Long, chair of the Senate Finance Committee was reported out of committee on April 17, 1972, with much stronger limits on revenue sharing priorities. A revenue sharing bill was passed in the House on June 22. In the Senate, Long put aside the Family Assistance Plan then under consideration and took

---

[75]Stephen Ambrose, Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician, 1962-1972 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 398-99; Dommel, The Politics of Revenue Sharing, 1974, 96-98.
[76]Dommel, The Politics of Revenue Sharing, 1974, 103-4, 112-14.

up the revenue sharing proposal. The Finance Committee reported favorably on the bill on August 16, and a Conference Committee worked out the differences in the formulas for revenue sharing which existed between the two houses. The final version was signed into law by Nixon on October 20, 1972, and given the title "State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act."[77] Nixon discussed his decision to sign the bill during his October 28, 1972 radio address, linking revenue sharing to "..decision making power, and the means to carry out those decisions, are flowing back to the grassroots."[78]

As Nixon managed to press Congress on his revenue sharing plans, he was moderately successful at removing administrative control over local programs from federal agencies and placing it on the states. If anything, Nixon was even more determined to expand decentralization in the second administration.[79] Nixon encouraged the further expansion of revenue sharing in 1974, pressing passage in a Congress which was quite hostile to his administration. Indeed, Nixon pursued revenue sharing reforms long after such legislation was politically viable, and even as he

---

[77]Nathan, Manvel and Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing, 1975, 16-19.
[78]The Clearest Choice (Committee to Re-Elect the President, 1972), 45.
[79]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 70-73.

undermined his own efforts by simultaneously pressing a new round of reorganization.[80]

Later critics argued that Nixon's revenue sharing plan was simply a budgetary device to limit spending or a "backdoor" method for eliminating unwanted programs.[81] As Richard Nathan points out, however, such hasty dismissals fail to capture the complexity of Nixon's intentions for decentralization though revenue sharing:

> According to the latter view, Nixon simply decentralized the programs he did not like. I submit that these interpretations, emphasizing conservatism and negativism in the domestic policies of the Nixon years, are too simple and, in many areas, are unduly influenced by later events - Watergate, the White House "plumbers" and Nixon's resignation.[82]

The true aim of revenue sharing, like reorganization, was decentralization. In essence, revenue sharing acted much like reorganization: it removed power from Washington and returned it to the "grassroots."[83] This made revenue sharing and reorganization targets for Congressional and bureaucratic resistance, increasing Nixon's insistence that further revenue sharing and reorganization efforts

---

[80]Nathan, Manvel and Calkins, Monitoring Revenue Sharing, 1975, 19.
[81]Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 172.
[82]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 26.
[83]William Gormley, Taming the Bureaucracy, 1989), 176-77.

were needed. The irony of Nixon's reform efforts lay in the fact that the more successful Nixon was at achieving reform, the less successful future reform efforts would be, as each victory would be more likely to increase the resistance of those who traditionally wielded administrative power.

By turning this power over certain elements of the budget to decentralized federal offices and the states, Nixon created new flexibility in the way money would be used and accounted for and avoided the necessity to exercise central control himself.[84] Under the best political arrangement, local governments would control this money directly. For example, Nixon linked revenue sharing to the new freedom and responsibility of urban managers to run their cities, noting in a November 1, 1972 radio speech that "The goal of all these proposals is to make government responsive again to the voice of the average citizen."[85] Like reorganization, revenue sharing also came under criticism for decentralizing government past a safe point of control. Critics claimed that the executive branch might lose even more power to set national goals under such a program.[86] Additionally, some people feared that the unpredictable nature of state governments would

---

[84]The Nixon Presidential News Conferences, 1978, 150-51.
[85]The Clearest Choice, 1972, 60-61.
[86]Michael Reagan, The New Federalism (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 96-101.

permit fiscally irresponsible state legislatures to decide how to spend revenue which had been returned to the states.[87] In the end, these critics concluded, revenue sharing might create poorer delivery of government services at all administrative levels.

With revenue sharing in place, Nixon's attention had returned to reorganization. The two policies were thus intertwined, although separated in their legislative form, and the only real obstacle to decentralization Nixon faced was new arrangement of the executive branch. Given the success of revenue sharing, the reorganization program gained even greater importance in Nixon's plans: without reorganization, newly decentralized programs would come into conflict with bureaucratic controls.[88] At the same time, however, Nixon's increased success in one arena of reform seemed to lead to less success in the other arena, as members of Congress nervously reacted to their loss of power. Rather than compromise in one arena or the other, Nixon pressed for success in both, and ultimately failed in both. Nevertheless, revenue sharing remains a point of pride for the former president. In a 1984 interview, he remarked "There was a feeling, despite the way [my] administration ended, that at least it was an administration that knew what it was doing...Domestic affairs, despite

---

[87]Nixon: The First Year of His Presidency, 1970, 67-68.
[88]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 8.

the fact we did not have the Congress, we got (sic) revenue sharing and environmental programs."[89]

C. Explaining the Nixon Decisions: Traditional Models

Nixon's administrative choices present a difficult problem for the "rational decider" explanation of presidential behavior. On the one hand, Neustadt and others argue that presidents must increase their power to persuade by demonstrating tenacity and skill, increasing public prestige and their reputation of being "tough." On the other hand, Neustadt portrays Nixon as a president who demonstrated these qualities and failed. Neustadt attributes staff deficiencies to the Nixon White House "counter-bureaucracy" which, to some degree, echoed the "staff system" of the Eisenhower presidency. That system is damaged by loyal staff members who view power as hierarchical in nature, leading to a misguided sense of loyalty to the president and reducing the amount of dissent and discussion within the White House (in fact, Neustadt intimates Nixon learned this unfortunate organizational lesson from Ike).[90] The result, claims Neustadt, was an "'administrative presidency'...that could guarantee

---

[89]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 25.
[90]Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1980), 117-19.

Nixon or his agents mastery at any time of anybody's choices, anywhere on the domestic side of government."[91]

But the irony of this critique comes from the advice Neustadt and others give to modern presidents: learn to persuade and, ultimately, control the government. The power to achieve one's goals is the aim of persuasion, and Neustadt's measure of a "successful" presidency is one where achievement of goals is the end of political decision making. As Chapter One points out, this locks Neustadt into the "bias trap" of reading a president's goals as the rational cause of presidential action. If a president acts in a manner which seems to undermine or contradict those posited goals, the president must be making grave mistakes or acting "irrationally". Thus, Neustadt explains presidential "failures" as either errors in political judgement or "irrational" behavior.

When this standard is applied to the Nixon decisions, however, the limits of the "rational decider" model become clear. When the second set of reorganization plans were announced, Neustadt hardly considered Nixon's efforts a mistake in political judgement, claiming "It's not very new..It's not as different as it looks. All this is a determined effort to get control of the details and operations of the executive establishment. Mr. Nixon was not the first president who wanted to do this. However, his

---

[91]Neustadt, Presidential Power, 1980, 198-200.

is the most intensive effort that I can recall."[92] While the last sentence would seem to indicate that Neustadt was troubled by Nixon's approach, the context of his comment seems to suggest he was merely surprised by the vigor with which Nixon pursued change, as were several other political scientists interviewed for the same National Journal article.

Indeed, Nixon followed a pattern of presidential behavior which did not seem odd or in error for the modern presidency. As Peri Arnold points out, the expectation of the "managerial presidency" requires this type of control. Arnold concludes that presidents pursue reorganization precisely because they need to build reputation and prestige. He specifically argues that Nixon's ambitions for reorganization were not idiosyncratic but "..were characteristic of the modern presidency."[93] Elsewhere, Arnold describes Nixon's handling of the Ash Council's recommendations and the later transfer of power from the "experts" at OMB to the political side of the administration as an effort to "tame" the departments and increase presidential power.[94] Arnold concludes that the

---

[92]Dom Bonafede, "President Nixon's Executive Reorganization Plans Prompt Praise and Criticism," National Journal 5 (March 10, 1973): 339.

[93]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 361-63, 302.

[94]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 273, 294, 356; see also Crenson and Rourke, "By Way of Conclusion," 161-62.

"Watergate" syndrome obscured this desire from the observer's attention:

> While different in fact and principle from the mass of questionable, covert activities of the Nixon administration, those final, unilateral reorganization efforts of the administration appeared to melt into the mass of suspicious activities conducted by a chief executive who seemed not to recognize the limitations imposed by the regime in which he worked.[95]

Therein lies the task of the modern "managerial presidency": if presidents wish to act, they must control. Why would a president take on such a task, if control is so difficult? Arnold does not answer that question directly, suggesting that the need to make political choices "come alive" might drive presidents to reorganization. But Arnold stops short of examining these choices, and instead relies on the "rational decider" model for explaining why presidents would choose to engage in reorganization efforts.[96]

The Neustadt model fails to adequately explain Nixon's decisions, however. Presidents must control the administrative process if they wish to succeed. If presidents must control government to avoid the appearance of frustration and build reputation and prestige, Neustadt

---

[95]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 273.
[96]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 361-63.

seems to imply that they must learn to control the bureaucracy. In fact, Neustadt faults Harry Truman for failing to learn this lesson. On the other hand, it is precisely this control which Neustadt argues led directly to Watergate.[97] The political goal of control is undermined by the strategic choices which lead to control. Neustadt's model is thus caught in a dilemma where the goal is undermined by the means to achieving that goal. In a sense, Neustadt wishes to have it both ways: Presidents should control without being controlling.

To save his model, Neustadt finds it necessary to separate Nixon from other presidents by distinguishing Nixon as a person. His focus turns to Nixon's "temperament," arguing that one must be careful to "beware the insecure" when selecting presidents.[98] Elsewhere, Neustadt claims that Nixon's own failings led to his "administrative presidency." Had Nixon been a better judge of character, more discriminating in whom he placed trust, more careful to whom he divested power, Neustadt implies, Nixon would have been a successful president.[99] In the end, Neustadt relies more on a "personality" model of behavior than the model he is advancing in the remainder of his book. Eisenhower's and Truman's failures are de-

---

[97]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency,, 1986, 157; Klein, Making It Perfectly Clear, 1980, 357.
[98]Neustadt, Presidential Power, 1980, 182-83.
[99]Neustadt, Presidential Power, 1980, 169-70, 189.

scribed as bad choices, not personality faults. But, it seems, Nixon is the victim of his own character. Thus, Neustadt can keep his model of control and simply warn that the "right person" must be at the helm.

Perhaps Neustadt might reply by arguing that Nixon merely "overlearned" the lesson of control and that a moderate middle ground between loyalty and obstruction might be found. However, the consequences of Nixon's efforts would have further undermined Neustadt's notion of persuasion. As argued below, Nixon's proposed reorganization and program of revenue sharing were reflections of his desire to surrender power, not increase it. Other observers, like Richard Nathan, argue that Nixon specifically rejected the idea of "persuasion" when he moved away from Cabinet control of domestic policy.[100] Ultimately, Nixon's attempt to alter the bureaucratic setting of his administration and to promote and expand decentralization through revenue sharing was seen as a hopeless attempt at change. Further, the methods for change Nixon selected decreased, not enhanced, his prestige by increasing the determination of the bureaucracy and Congress to resist his efforts at persuasion and, later, control.[101] Thus,

---

[100]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 41-43.

[101]See the admonitions in Rufus Miles, "Considerations for a President Bent on Reorganization," Public Administration Review 37 (March/April 1977): 161-62; James March and John Olson, "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government,"

the values Nixon sought to put into action through reorganization and revenue sharing are not reflected in the apparent goal Neustadt assumes Nixon must possess: the increase of power. The "rational decider" model does not consider the possibility that action to increase the power to persuade may, in fact, ultimately undermine that power.

The Nixon initiatives on reorganization and revenue sharing cast similar shadows on the "personality" model of presidential behavior. James David Barber argues that Nixon is the classic "active-negative" type, thirsting for independence and power. Nixon felt a need for "getting, holding and protecting power." Thus, Barber describes Nixon as "..power seeking...[his] life is a hard struggle to achieve and hold power..."[102] Barber's interpretation of Nixon as an "active-negative" seemed to be confirmed by the events surrounding Watergate. Indeed, a small industry of "Nixon analysis" boomed in the early 1970's. Old opponents like Frank Mankiewicz argued that Nixon had only a "..limitless appetite for victory..No one can point to a Nixon ideology, beyond winning the next election..." Others went further to argue that Nixon was seeking in his staff the earlier loyalty provided by his mother, that he was "anal compulsive" in his desire for power, and that even his appearance reflected the evil nature of his

---

American Political Science Review 77 (June 1983): 285-86; Price, With Nixon, 1977, 194-96.

[102]James David Barber, Presidential Character (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 299, 362, 322, 9.

character.[103] Herbert Parmet summarized their conclusions even more forcefully in his recent biography on Nixon:

> Once the depth of the abuse of power had been revealed, there was an insatiable appetite for psychological explanations which, of course, was not unique to Nixon. But noteworthy in his case was the shelfful of volumes specifically devoted to psychobiographical dissections. They scrutinized every known aspect of his life, most particularly as gleaned from early accounts and contemporary interviews. They concluded that he was a psychopathic liar, needed maternal love, disdained his father, and was so full of aggression that he loved mashing potatoes, which was read as proof that he needed outlets for his inner hostilities.[104]

Contemporaneous evaluations of Nixon's reorganization and revenue sharing efforts belie these backward glances, however. As described earlier, Nixon did not turn to staff control of the domestic agenda immediately upon taking office, and did so only after he began to experience legislative defeats and dissension within his Cabinet. Nor, as also noted earlier, was the reaction to Nixon's reorganization plans universally negative. The predominant mood, even after the more ambitious "superagency"

---

[103]Frank Mankiewicz, Perfectly Clear: Nixon from Whittier to Watergate (New York: Quadrangle, 1973), 2; David Abrahamsen, Nixon Versus Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976), 184, 180-81.
[104]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 16.

proposal was unveiled, was approval and some condescension: many thought that Nixon was simply naive to believe power could ever be wrested from Congress or the bureaucracy. The "personality" model argues that those inclinations should have been present at the start of the Nixon administration, while the record suggests that Nixon did not turn to the devices Barber attributes to his "type" until much later in the administration.

Moreover, recent works have begun to cast doubts on the evidence collected by these various armchair psychobiographers. Stephen Ambrose's recent two volume biography of Nixon, for example, argues that Nixon had a comparatively normal and, in some respects, somewhat privileged childhood for a Depression-era family: his parents were much more loving than previously believed, and Nixon showed greater amounts of self-esteem than Barber suggests.[105] Peri Arnold agrees, arguing that Nixon's behavior is reflective of forces beyond personality:

> The appearance is that President Nixon's ambitions for reorganization were part and parcel of the same personal flaws that led to his misuse of power. However this appearance is false, and it may even put things backwards. Nixon's ambitions for reorganization were not idiosyncratic; they were characteristic of the modern

---

[105]Robert Strong, "Richard Nixon Revisited," Virginia Quarterly Review 64 (Summer 1988): 526-27.

> presidency...The imperative of the managerial presidency was that the presidents must control. If reorganization could not arrange government to make it controllable, then perhaps other means to that goal are justifiable.[106]

As noted earlier, Arnold's explanation for Nixon's choices fails to account for these choices completely. Yet, it is worth noting that personality does not seem to be the critical factor for shaping those decisions.

Barber's analysis is undermined further when one considers the ultimate intention of reorganization and revenue sharing. Nixon's decision to reorganize was an integral element to his plan to turn administrative power over to the states and individuals through revenue sharing. Without reorganization, revenue sharing decentralization would not have occurred.[107] If Nixon desired power, he selected a mode of reorganization and budgeting specifically at odds with that desire. Again, the posited values that are attributed to Nixon are not evidenced in Nixon's behavior, and Barber's assumptions about Nixon's values provide a poor explanation of the president's decisions.

---

[106]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 302.
[107]Moe, "Traditional Organizational Principles and the Managerial Presidency," 130-31; Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 8.

D. Explaining the Nixon Decisions: Political Beliefs

A better accounting of Nixon's behavior might be found in the "belief system" model. By looking for a consistently held "system," one can better explain the selection of Nixon's administrative strategy. Nixon's strident anti-communism and keen interest in foreign policy tended to obscure his political belief system. On the other hand, that system was consistent with his concern, nearing obsession, to oppose communism. From 1950 on, the subject of communism was Nixon's strongest theme when giving speeches, swallowing references to issues which otherwise might have been given his attention. Just as his focus on foreign policy can be mistaken for a lack of concern in domestic issues, however, one would be mistaken to assume that Nixon revealed no political beliefs for the domestic agenda.[108]

Like many presidents, Nixon has been classified as a "conservative," "pragmatic," and even "liberal" president. Those classifications suffer the "bias trap" noted in Chapter One, however, and lead to the erroneous conclusion that Nixon had no political beliefs when he fails to fit neatly into one of the categories.[109] This "bias trap" also led to the charge that Nixon was merely a political

---

[108]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 298.
[109]See, at various points, Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, esp. 58-60.

opportunist, supporting liberal positions once in office because they were politically acceptable and turning his back on "true conservative principle" when such action would be too politically costly.[110] The key values held by Nixon revolve around his interpretation of individual freedom. Specifically, Nixon oriented his political views toward increasing individual control over one's own life.[111] According to Nixon's belief system, government intervention can undermine this control, and Nixon maintained throughout his political career the principle that local government is always the preferred source of interference, if such interference is necessary. Only under a specific set of circumstances is national action desired (unlike Carter and, more importantly, Reagan, as the next two chapters will demonstrate).[112]

Most observers attribute Nixon's dissatisfaction with the bureaucracy to his partisan conflict with remaining Democratic appointees, and Nixon himself occasionally slipped into this language. But a deeper disdain for government interference underscores this attitude, and Nixon's desire to undermine bureaucratic control of domestic policy predates his own administration. His early experience working for the OPA during the Roosevelt

---

[110]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 79, 116.
[111]Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 56; Price, With Nixon, 1977, 47-48.
[112]For early Nixon views on the subject, see James Keogh, This is Nixon (New York: G.P. Putman's Sons, 1956), 82.

years seemed to first sour Nixon's view of bureaucracies, despite the fact that he had gone to Washington with confidence that more could be done by the government to help individuals hit hard by the Depression. Nixon noted that after that experience "I took a very dim view of controls," explaining unrestrained power in the hands of bureaucrats was to be feared above other uses of power.[113] That fear of unrestrained power, ironic in light of the Watergate revelations, was also directed at "big business." Nixon was no more trustful of so much power in private hands than public.[114]

Nixon was extolling the virtues of individual control and decrying the power of "irresponsible government agencies" as early as 1945, the beginning of his political career, arguing (as he later would when justifying revenue sharing) that individual control is critical to initiative and democracy.[115] At a Lincoln Day dinner in 1946, Nixon took the opportunity to depart from discussions of foreign policy and attacked the Truman administration for replacing "individual enterprise" with a "planned economy" which removed individual control over life.[116] His first election circular called for "..a sound progressive program in which government will work with and through pri-

---

[113]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 67.
[114]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 62.
[115]Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 46; Keogh, This is Nixon, 1956, 79-86.
[116]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 29.

vate enterprise, toward our goal of assuring housing, clothing, food, education, and opportunity for every American."[117]

These core political beliefs also shaped Nixon's behavior once he took office. His 1947 support of the Taft-Hartley bill was justified as an attempt to release the fetters of control from the working class, which Nixon believed would become an inherently inferior class if overregulated and overprotected.[118] One biographer credits Nixon's concern for individual economic progress as the cause for Nixon's decidedly progressive views on civil rights, reflected throughout his service in Congress and during the Eisenhower administration. As Vice President, Nixon advocated spending to improve the nation's infrastructure, also with the goal of increasing individual enterprise.[119]

Nixon's 1950 Senate campaign set these ideas out with greater clarity and force. In his campaign speech notes for that contest, Nixon stressed his opposition to communism, telling a friend "That's all the people want to

---

[117]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 96.
[118]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 130-31.
[119]Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 180. Parmet gives Nixon credit for being much more vocal and aggressive on individual economic rights for blacks than most fellow Republicans. He later argues this same view led Nixon to his concern for "black capitalism." See Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 267-69, 546.

hear about." But, as his notes suggest, Nixon had a domestic agenda in mind as well:

> ..must stop with negative opposition - indefensible position - opposition to security, wages, housing, medical care. We must believe & sell ideas that we can offer a system which meets the need better - by receiving minimum govt aid & maximum ind[ependent] enterprise & voluntary cooperative effort [Nixon's abbreviations].[120]

Nixon's campaign continued to oppose "compulsory regimentation" on major domestic issues (health care was a prime example).[121]

Nor was this criticism confined to Democratic administrations, as many Nixon observers claim. Nixon argued that such power in Republican hands was equally intrusive and dangerous, and erroneously believed Eisenhower recognized the same problem. This view even led Nixon to call for a retrenchment of Republican government during the 1956 campaign, arguing the protection of individual freedom demanded greater attention.[122] During his campaign for the presidency in 1960, Nixon argued that "terrible hazards" would emerge if government were allowed to continue to interfere with the lives of citizens.[123] The

---

[120]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 190.
[121]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 189.
[122]Ambrose, Nixon, 1989, 328-29; Keogh, This is Nixon, 1956, 80-81, 158-59.
[123]Earl Mazo, Richard Nixon: A Political and Personal Portrait (New York: Harper and Row, 1959) 282-83.

contrast that Nixon drew between communism and capitalism during that campaign also reflected these political beliefs.[124]

Nixon repeated this theme during the 1968 and 1972 presidential contests.[125] During the 1968 contest, Nixon argued that "Government is formed to protect the individual's life, property and rights, and to help the helpless - not to dominate a person's life or rob him of his self-respect."[126] William Safire notes that Nixon insisted on adding the following to a speech to be delivered on October 11: "One candidate advocates concentrating more and more power in the federal government; I say it is time for new policies which will move power away from Washington back to the states, local governments and the people."[127] While Nixon clearly preferred state and local government to federal intervention, he rarely distinguished between the two. When he did so, he consistently made reference to local government as being closest to the people. Even during his 1963-67 exile from politics, Nixon continued to speak on the theme of de-

---

[124]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 353-54.
[125]Earl Mazo and Stephen Hess, Nixon: A Political Portrait (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), 314-15; The Clearest Choice, 1972, 20-23, 45, 60-61.
[126]Safire, Before the Fall, 1977, 61.
[127]Safire, Before the Fall, 1977, 95.

centralization and the importance of returning power to local communities.[128]

At the beginning of Nixon's administration, these political beliefs were meant to act as a guide for action. During the early first months, while he still retained confidence in the Cabinet as an agency for change, Nixon circulated a copy of John Gardner's Godkin lectures, which had recently been delivered at Harvard. Nixon attached a note to his Cabinet members and White House staff, saying in part "I found John Gardner's Godkin lectures expressed better than anything I have read what I hope would be the philosophy of this administration." In the circulated copy of the lectures, Nixon made a point of underlining the parts of Gardner's argument calling for putting faith in private, not public, institutions and the need to restore the "vitality of local leadership" over centralized planning.[129]

As alluded to earlier, Nixon made these beliefs the centerpiece of his attack on the Great Society, giving his words a partisan edge but keeping the focus of his criticism of Democratic policies on their undermining effect on individual and community life.[130] As Tom Wicker notes, Nixon's opposition to bureaucratic power had little to do

---

[128]Richard M. Nixon, ed. Howard Bremer (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, 1975), 95.
[129]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 533-34.
[130]Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 169; Nixon, In the Arena, 1990, 352.

with the Democrats still in the bureaucracy. The President's views were brought with him to Washington, and were not shaped by the Washington bureaucracy at the time he took office:

> Nixon actually had a certain definable domestic vision, a commodity not every president has brought to the White House: he wanted, and to some extent achieved, a government doing what needed to be done for the welfare of the nation, but doing it with a diminished concentration of power in Washington.[131]

Nixon remained, in the words of one observer, "surprisingly constant" in his application of those beliefs to domestic policy, through efforts at reorganization and his unwillingness to compromise on revenue sharing when presented to Congress.[132] This determination and consistency led Richard Nathan to conclude that Nixon's decentralization plan was hardly one of political expedience (as one might expect Neustadt to argue), since it called for the decentralization of a broad range of categories and made numerous enemies.[133]

---

[131]Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 540-41.
[132]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 16; Rather and Gates, The Palace Guard, 1974, 231-32; John Osborne, The Second Year of the Nixon Watch (New York: Liveright Press, 1971), 148-49; and, more generally, Nixon Presidential Press Conferences, 1978, 251-52 and Dommel, The Politics of Revenue Sharing, 1974, 111-12 for his determined attitude on revenue sharing.
[133]Nathan, The Plot That Failed, 1975, 22-23, 26.

One might even argue Nixon's personal friendships reflect this set of core political beliefs, at the risk of engaging in revisionist "psychobiography." Nixon did have few close friends, and the people who did get close to him were all "self-made" entrepreneurs: Don Kendall, Robert Abplanalp, and Bebe Rebozo, to name the more important friends.[134]

Far from being an opportunist or mere pragmatist, Nixon held a core set of beliefs throughout his career and during some very different periods of history. Herbert Parmet neatly summarized those beliefs in his recent biography of Nixon, listing them as

> ..the encouragement of individual enterprise, protection of those with modest means from economic hazards as the nation bumped along through the uncertainties of reconversion, and a consistent sense of nationalism and realpolitik in dealing with the rest of the world.[135]

With these ideological goals in mind, the reasons for Nixon's administrative strategy can be better understood. A second important element of Nixon's belief system is his well documented belief in the primacy of executive power. Nixon viewed the president as the "tribune of the general interests," acting for people in government and, in this

---

[134]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 396, 400.
[135]Parmet, Richard Nixon and His America, 1990, 116.

case, even against government.[136] It is important to recognize, however, this view did not include public participation in the process of governing. The people speak at the ballot box, in Nixon's view, and then expect the president to act (in contrast to Jimmy Carter, as the next chapter will demonstrate).[137] This presidential dominance is motivated by the ideological ends or, in Nixon's own words, the "great goals" of a leader.[138] Until that dominance was secured through the use of the Domestic Council and, later, the "counter-bureaucracy," the administration seemed to drift through domestic policy action. Once that control was established, however, a clear pattern of action emerged aimed at the goal of decentralizing government.[139]

Additionally, revenue sharing was a necessity for decentralization. Without the revenue sharing plan, decentralization would be meaningless, as control over money would give permanent control to Congress. By selectively decentralizing the government through a program of revenue sharing, Nixon hoped to return elements of government power to the individual or local government. The inten-

---

[136]Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 110; Reichley, Conservatives in an Age of Change, 1981, 247.
[137]Jules Witcover, Marathon (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 398-99.
[138]Nixon, In the Arena, 1990, 286-87.
[139]Theodore White, The Making of the President, 1972 (New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973), 180.

tion of revenue sharing was clear to all, and Congress responded shortly after Nixon took office by taking back the power he had wrested from them.[140] As Tom Wicker points out, Nixon's revenue sharing approach was

> ...perhaps the most successful example of his hope to reorder government responsibilities so that necessary services could be performed at the most appropriate level...If revenue sharing did not come close to the promised 'revolution,' it was still a good try at redeeming government...[141]

Thus, the central dilemma of the Nixon domestic agenda can be explained by examining Nixon's own disposition to decentralization and executive action, two beliefs which created both centralization and decentralization, presidential control and political de-control, greater regulation and self-regulation, all at the same time.[142] As Theodore White described the Nixon paradox in 1975:

> [Nixon] held, as a leadership credo, that the president must control the government personally; but he held, as a political credo, that the Federal government must get rid of most of

---

[140]Nelson Polsby, "Presidential Cabinet Making: Lessons for the Political System," Political Science Quarterly 93 (Spring 1978): 17; Safire, Before the Fall, 1977, 7.

[141]Wicker, One of Us, 1991, 529.

[142]Price, With Nixon, 1977, 76-77; Evans and Novak, Nixon in the White House, 1971, 241-43; Reichley, Conservative in an Age of Change, 1981, 70.

> these controls- social, administrative, economic - which the Democrats had so long concentrated in Washington.[143]

The contradictory nature of the Nixon agenda, therefore, can only be made intelligible through a better understanding of Nixon's "belief system."

---

[143]White, The Making of the President, 1972, 1973, 181.

CHAPTER III

BELIEFS AND FAILURE: THE CARTER PRESIDENCY

An examination of the Carter presidency clearly reveals the troublesome role beliefs can play in decision making: political beliefs can lead presidents to make serious policy mistakes which can frustrate their own success. This chapter will examine the administrative strategies on reorganization and budgeting selected by Carter and will demonstrate that Carter's beliefs led him to pursue failed policies in both areas. The first and second sections of this chapter outline the policy decisions on reorganization and budgeting and the consequences they produced. Section three analyzes these decisions using the "rational decider" and "personality" models, and argues that neither model can adequately account for the decisions made by the president. The last section reexamines the decisions in light of Carter's political beliefs, and demonstrates that the "belief system" model can better explain Carter's behavior.

A. Reorganizing Administration: The Carter Record

Jimmy Carter's campaign for the presidency in 1976 was unusual in the stress it placed on administrative reform. No previous candidate for that office made reorganization a central theme in the campaign, but Carter repeatedly stressed the need for change in the executive branch, warning voters not to support him if they did not support reform.[1] His campaign autobiography argued these changes could be achieved because they had been successful at the state level, including Carter's home state of Georgia; the so-called "Georgia example" with reorganization became a centerpiece of Carter's campaign speeches.[2] Carter's interest in the issue of reorganization was further highlighted by the establishment of a working group on reorganization planning during his campaign, chaired by Harrison Wellford and staffed by a dozen professional administrators. The group was charged with developing recommendations for changes in federal organization and began their review of the executive branch almost immediately. Their early recommendation for the

---

[1]John Dempsey, "Carter's Reorganization: A Midterm Appraisal," Public Administration Review 39 (January/February 1979): 74.

[2]Jimmy Carter, Why Not the Best? (Nashville: Boardman, 1975), 105-16.

establishment of a Department of Energy was quickly announced by candidate Carter.[3]

Carter recognized reorganization would not be an easy matter, noting in the 1974 announcement of his candidacy that "This is no job for the faint-hearted. It will be met with violent opposition from those who enjoy a special privilege, those who prefer to work in the dark, or those whose private fiefdoms are threatened."[4] The announcement is particularly noteworthy in that Carter did not cite more traditional goals for reorganization, such as efficiency or cost-effectiveness. Instead, Carter intimated his motivation lay in moving the control of administration from private power to other hands. His plans to do so were ambitious even in the face of this anticipated opposition. Early in his campaign, Carter announced that he planned to reduce the number of federal agencies from 1,900 to 200 through reorganization.[5]

Believing that swift action would be needed to overcome the "violent opposition" he expected, the newly inaugurated Carter quickly moved to begin his reorgani-

---

[3]Peri Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 308.

[4]The quotation is from Carter's 1974 announcement of his intention to run for office. Quoted by Carter in "Remarks to Reporters Announcing the Executive Branch Reorganization Studies," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, Vol. II (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1978), 1192.

[5]Joel Havemann, "Reorganization - How Clean Can Carter's Broom Sweep?" National Journal 9 (January 1, 1977): 6.

zation efforts. At his first Cabinet meeting, Carter asked each department head to submit a preliminary reorganization plan no later than February 15.[6] Only two weeks after taking office, Carter spent a great deal of time during his first fireside chat discussing the reorganization effort he was proposing. Citing the need to make government more "competent" and "compassionate," Carter explained he would immediately seek congressional renewal of his authority as president to set reorganization policy.[7] As his announcement speech had suggested, Carter noted his goal was to improve communication, not efficiency alone, stating "Ordinary people should be able to understand how our own Government works, and to get satisfactory answers to questions."[8]

Following the speech, Carter created a President's Reorganization Project committee (PRP) within the Office of Management and Budget to make recommendations for agency reorganization. Chaired by Richard Pettigrew, the PRP reported directly to Carter but maintained a close

---

[6]Untitled Memo, Bert Lance to Cabinet Members, February 4, 1977, Box 270 [CF O/A 28][1], Domestic Policy Staff File, Jimmy Carter Library.

[7]Presidency 1977 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1978), 69A.

[8]"Address From the White House Library," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1977), 73.

association with OMB action on budgeting.[9] The PRP included a group of political appointees, OMB careerists and a group of administrators "detailed" to the PRP by the individual agencies themselves.[10] Within its first year, the PRP staff had swollen to 300, with a $2,172,000 operating budget, a considerable commitment of staff and money.[11]

Two days after the first fireside chat, Carter formally submitted a request to Congress for renewal of the president's authority to submit executive branch reorganization plans directly to the legislature.[12] The power to do so had lapsed following Nixon's attempt to secure passage of his second round of reorganizations to establish the"superagencies," and Carter believed the authority was critical to the success of his reorganization effort.[13] Initially, Carter planned to merely ask for a renewal of Nixon's authority, but his reorganization staff made several recommendations to Carter for the expansion of that power.[14] The authority Carter eventually requested went well beyond Nixon's powers by granting Carter

---

[9]Memo, Hamilton Jordan to Bert Lance and Richard Pettigrew, "Structure for Reorganization Effort," Box 52, Hamilton Jordan's Files, Jimmy Carter Library.
[10]Dempsey, "Carter's Reorganization," 74.
[11]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 311.
[12]Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, 1977, 81-84.
[13]Richard Pettigrew, "Improving Government Competence," Publius 8 (Spring 1978): 100.
[14]Havemann, "Reorganization," 4.

certain new freedoms for proposing and amending reorganization plans. Both Nixon and Carter had the power to submit plans to Congress, which would be enacted within 60 days if Congress did not vote to veto the plan. But Carter asked for additional power to submit amendments to those plans within 30 days of their submission, giving him the power to bargain and compromise with members and avoid the possibility of Congressional amendments. Carter also requested that Congress eliminate earlier rules which stipulated that only one plan be submitted in any 30 day period, that each plan cover only one executive area, and that each plan submitted carry detailed information on cost savings. Finally, Carter requested the reorganization power be granted for the entire four year period of his administration.[15] As Peri Arnold reflected on these changes, he noted:

> In this light, the reorganization authority, as it had been altered for Carter, seemed an ideal means for seeking small to medium scale organizational change. The alterations gave the president more flexibility about what could be included within one plan, more flexibility over the frequency with which plans could be sent to Congress, and more latitude on the justifications contained within those plans.[16]

---

[15]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 309.
[16]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 310.

In other words, the Carter reorganization request was designed to place the greatest amount of control over the legislative process in Carter's hands.

Approval of this new power was forthcoming, but some members of Congress expressed reservations. Carter had met with congressional leaders on November 17, 1976 to discuss the renewal of Nixon's earlier power, particularly the inability of Congress to amend the president's proposals.[17] The new requests raised even more questions, but the method of approval (adoption through Congressional inaction) remained the main point of contention. Abraham Ribicoff (D-Conn.), as Chair of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, was willing to simply endorse Carter's requests, but Jack Brooks (D-Texas), Ribicoff's counterpart as the Chair of the House Government Operations Committee, objected on constitutional grounds and demanded a positive vote by Congress for each reorganization plan be required.[18] The new proposed changes in presidential authority made passage even more uncertain in the face of Brooks's almost certain opposition.

Carter submitted his new requests on February 4, 1977. Four days later, Ribicoff convened hearings on the request in the Senate, with a series of favorable witnesses testifying to the necessity of the new presidential

---

[17]Havemann, "Reorganization," 5.
[18]Havemann, "Carter's Plans for Reorganization Get Mixed Reception," National Journal 9 (February 12, 1977): 255.

authority. In the House, HR 3407 was introduced as the president's version of the reorganization request, while Brooks proposed a substitute bill, HR 3131. On March 3, the Senate voted 92-0 to agree to the president's request.[19] In the House, a compromise bill, HR 5040, passed on March 29 by a 395-22 vote. While Representative Brooks still opposed the presidential "fiat" of reorganization approval, he did manage to limit Carter's authority to a three year period and demand that cost savings figures be required in all proposals. With those concessions, Brooks grudgingly voted in favor of the compromise, calling it "the best unconstitutional bill that can be drawn up." On March 31, a House-Senate compromise bill, identical to that passed by the House, was sent to Carter.[20]

Thus, in the end, Congress granted Carter new reorganization authority, but not all the particulars he had requested. Carter still took pride in the passage of the Reorganization Act, signing the bill into law on April 6. At the bill signing ceremony, Carter reemphasized the importance of reorganization to his administration, and stressed the public would play a key role in the formulation of reorganization agendas:

19"Executive Reorganization Powers: Action to Date in the 95th Congress," Congressional Digest 56 (April 1977): 106-7.

20"Recent Major Action in the Congress," Congressional Digest 56 (May 1977): 129-30.

> The reorganization process which is set into motion today will be an open one. We intend to involve the Congress, State and local governments, and individual groups and citizens who will be affected by change. We shall depend on public awareness and participation to help us pinpoint problems, to originate ideas and solutions, and to provide reactions to various options developed by reorganization study teams which are already at work.[21]

By the end of August, the PRP had already begun 30 studies of reorganization proposals in seven major areas: economic development, general government, human resources, natural resources, national security and international affairs, management improvement, and regulatory reform.[22] In July, Carter sent to Congress a first Reorganization Plan, proposing to consolidate many of the White House staff positions as well as a reorganization plan for the Executive Office of the President.[23] The plan reduced the White House staff from 485 positions to 351 and the EOP staff by 15%. The plan eliminated the Domestic Council created by Nixon, the Council on International Economic Policy, the Office of Telecommunications Policy, the Federal Property Council, the Office of Drug Abuse Policy,

---

[21]"Statement on Signing S.,626 into Law," Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I, 1977, 573.
[22]David Beam, "Public Administration is Alive and Well - and Living in the White House," Public Administration Review 38 (January/February 1978), 72-73.
[23]Betty Glad, Jimmy Carter (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), 412.

the Energy Resources Council and the Economic Opportunity Council.[24] The reductions were not all they seemed, however, as many upper level managers were simply transferred rather than eased from office. As one member of the reorganization team summarized the changes, "It was a reduction of Indians, rather than chiefs." Nevertheless, the changes did mark an important conceptual change in the expected expansion of the EOP.[25] In August, Carter further proposed a 40% reduction in the number of federal advisory committees and commissions.[26] Carter seemed quite serious about fulfilling his promise to streamline government.[27]

The aims of this reorganization effort remained vague, however, beyond this seemingly traditional goal. The administration advocated a "bottom-up" approach to

---

[24]"Carter Proposes White House Reorganization," National Journal 9 (July 23, 1977): 1165.

[25]Dom Bonafede, "White House Reorganization - Separating Smoke From Substance," National Journal 9 (August 20, 1977): 1307.

[26]Pettigrew, "Improving Government Competence," 101.

[27]Not everyone in the White House was pleased with these changes, however. Hamilton Jordan was informed about cuts in his office and complained "If the cuts were going to affect everyone equally I could justify having to lose two persons.. Under your proposal, I will make the greatest sacrifice of any senior staff member and will have the smallest staff. GIVE ME BACK MY ONE PERSON." Undated Memo, Hamilton Jordan to Harrison Wellford and A.D. Frazier [CF, O/A 646][3], Box 53, Reorganization File, Jimmy Carter Library. Apparently worried the reorganization team would think he was joking, Jordan included a handwritten note at the bottom of the memo, saying "I'm serious about this."

administrative reform, allowing a maximum amount of input from the people directly affected by the agency. These citizens were to lodge complaints and suggest reforms for the agency in question directly to the PRP.[28] To strengthen and expand citizen participation, each department was ordered in March 1978 to create a public participation funding program.[29] PRP staff member McIntyre described and defended the "bottom-up" approach in a speech before the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration on December 1, 1977, explaining:

> We've labeled this the "bottom-up" approach to contrast it with prior efforts that tried to reorganize from the "top-down" - tackling everything at once and looking only at the top level structure of departments and agencies. We think "bottom-up" is infinitely preferable because it bases recommendations on real evidence of problems; allows the most appropriate solution - whether structural, procedural or administrative; and avoids all or nothing confrontations...The third major distinguishing characteristic of our approach is its openness. Past reorganizers have developed proposals in relative secrecy and sprung them on the Congress and

---

[28]Pettigrew, "Improving Government Competence," 1978, 102-3. See also President's Reorganization Authority Materials, Domestic Policy Staff, "Questions and Answers on the President's Reorganization Project," April 6, 1977 [CF O/A 28][1], Domestic Policy Staff Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

[29]Memo, Jimmy Carter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, May 16, 1979, Box FG-3, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library.

> the people. We see no benefits in that approach. We want to take advantage of all the expertise available in this country, learn the lessons of the past, and test our proposals before we ask the President to make decisions.[30]

Thus, the "bottom-up" strategy required citizen participation to provide the focus for its efforts at reorganization. Without that participation, the PRP would have a difficult time isolating problems and the administration would lose the benefit of the public's experience dealing with the federal bureaucracy.[31] As a result, citizens were given several avenues for input into PRP deliberations: interest group surveys on organizational issues were distributed to approximately 1000 groups after a more general public appeal was filed in the July 7, 1977 Federal Register, as well as an additional 25,000 forms to smaller organizations; sessions with representatives of larger organizations such as the AFL-CIO, Business Roundtable, Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, New Directions, National Association of Counties, National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National League of Cities and the Conference of Mayors; reorganization staff members debriefed the 37 Federal Information Center

---

[30]"Remarks of Jim McIntyre before American Society for Public Administration, National Capital Area Chapter, December 1, 1977," 12/1/77-2/6/80, Box 79, WHCF-Government Reform Neustadt, Jimmy Carter Library.

[31]Jean Conley and Joel Havemann, "Reorganization - Two Plans, One Department Down, Much More to Come," National Journal 9 (December 3, 1977): 1872.

Regional Managers on the historic pattern of citizen complaints and questions concerning government performance; material collected through the White House mail from individual citizens; clipping surveys; and, finally, a series of public speeches and open meetings by Director Pettigrew himself.[32] The plan to allow direct citizen input into the reorganization project had its more humorous side as well: the PRP was plagued by calls from one citizen in Iowa who insisted upon payment for ideas he had submitted for reorganization which were subsequently adopted. Eventually, the man threatened to sue PRP director Pettigrew in a District of Columbia court for failing to provide reimbursement.[33]

Public consultation was also expanded by the PRP to include a survey of Congressional constituent problems. Pettigrew organized a survey of congressional offices during the summer of 1977, noting in his report to the President on September 29 that the survey "...provides an excellent source of bottom-up information on government performance;" Pettigrew noted later in that report that the survey had been "well received" and had provided "rich detail on the day-to-day functioning of federal programs

---

[32]Memo, Richard Pettigrew to Jody Powell, July 13, 1777, "Public Involvement Activities Report," Box FG-57, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library.
[33]Letter, Hazel Fulton to Richard Pettigrew, June 14, 1977, "Call from Bill Dennis, Iowa City, Iowa," Box FG-57, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library.

from the perspective of the average citizen." The survey was returned by some 200 members of Congress, chiefly Democrats who apparently were doing their best to cooperate with the new administration.[34] On October 28, 1977, President Carter sent a memorandum to the heads of executive departments and agencies, noting that "Senators and Congressmen devote a good portion of their time and staff resources...to helping individual constituents deal with government agencies." Carter went on to ask the agency heads to provide the Office of Management and Budget with information on how the agencies were handling these complaints.[35]

But the rationale behind this choice of strategy remained vaguely stated at best, and the specifics of the changes Carter would seek were not provided; instead, a series of "goals" were offered to justify the value of reform itself.[36] Contradictory lists of goals began to emerge in the press, however, and the rationale behind the early reorganization decisions remained hazy. While one might dismiss the confusion as a public relations problem

---

[34]Memo, Richard Pettigrew to the President, September 29, 1977, "Survey of Congressional Constituent Problems," Box FG-147, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library. Unless otherwise noted, the emphasis in this memo and those which follow are those of the original author.

[35]Memo, Jimmy Carter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, October 28, 1977, "Survey of Congressional Constituent Problems," Box FG-57, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library.

[36]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 312-13.

PRP was having explaining its actions, in reality the PRP staff simply didn't know where it was going. A rather surprising number of memos, raising questions about the goals of reorganization, had begun circulating in the PRP in the fall of 1977, several months into the administration's efforts in this area, and certainly late in the decision making process when one considers the time and energy being devoted to reorganization that summer. Members of the PRP staff held a meeting in the first week of November to reassess the PRP's efforts and goals. The report to Harrison Wellford summarizing the results of the meeting suggests an organization "adrift" from the mooring clear goals provide. For example, the memorandum argues Carter's original reorganization effort, the "Georgia example," attempted to restructure government through agency reductions. Although such a plan could work on the state level, the memo argues such reductions are not likely to be the focus of the PRP's future work (indeed, the participants shared considerable doubts that the "bottom-up" strategy was at all appropriate to such changes). Nor could the committee justify reorganization as a cost-cutting device. Instead, the committee embraced the ideas of productivity (in the sense of coordination of programs and fair enforcement of rules) and, more importantly, responsiveness (including "increase public participation and openness"). The conclusion of the memo best illustrates the confusion surrounding the PRP's goals:

> I think there is a real problem here. We are now stating our goals (in a less than confident fashion) in terms of productivity and responsiveness, but it is not (at least to me) clear that the results (projects) will in most cases be seen to reflect or further those goals to any significant degree. In particular, a series of reorganization plans which shift functions and programs from one department to another will not dramatically improve productivity and responsiveness, any more than they will reduce agency numbers or save budget dollars. I would offer the hypothesis that, generally speaking, program shifting through reorganization plans can mainly be justified by reference to goals intelligible mainly from a bureaucratic perspective; such goals are not insubstantial, but by themselves they will not do much to sell the program or to turn it into a selling point for the President.[37]

A few weeks later, another PRP internal memo agreed, stating:

> To date we have not done an adequate job of establishing firmly in our own minds, and communicating to the outside world, the goals of the reorganization, the rationale for our approach, and the significance of this effort in contrast to others. The result is some embarrassment and frustration about the vagueness and generality of our goals (and our inability thus far to operationally

---

[37]Memo, Si Lazarus to Stuart Eizenstat, November 11, 1977, "Reorganization Planning," Box 79, Government Reform-Neustadt, Jimmy Carter Library.

> define our projects in terms of these goals), some doubts about the wisdom of our approach, and a hesitancy to engage our critics and aggressively sell our efforts to the public. I think this continuing uncertainty about our goals and approach is unjustified and increasingly counterproductive.[38]

The memo went on to note the "bottom-up" approach was largely responsible for the drift in the organization, since such a strategy requires that no coordinating principles exist (or the underlying rationale, openness, is lost).

Given the discontinuity between the actions being taken by the administration in the series of reorganization plans submitted to Congress and the strategy for formulating reorganization through a "bottom-up" approach, it is not surprising the members of the PRP were puzzled by the strategy they were following. Members found the methods they were employing to gather information were inappropriate to the type of reorganization they knew would be politically beneficial. While the Carter administration made it clear <u>how</u> it would seek to reorganize, it was decidedly unclear as to <u>why</u> it was following the path it had chosen.

---

[38]Memo, Keith Miles to Peter Szanton, November 22, 1977, "The Carter Reorganization: Its Goals, Rationale and Distinguishing Characteristics," Box 79, Government Reform-Neustadt, Jimmy Carter Library.

Despite the confusion at PRP, Carter's first efforts were followed by a series of reorganization plans sent with great regularity to Congress between 1977 and 1980. By the time of his first Annual Message to Congress on January 19, 1978, Carter could claim the initial efforts at reorganization a success, as the administration had managed to streamline the Executive Office of the President as well as the White House staff, combined eleven agencies into a new Department of Energy and abolished 500 advisory committees and small agencies.[39] A second Reorganization Plan of 1977 had been announced on October 11, proposing to combine the United States Information Agency and the State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.[40] The 1978 plans included efforts to enforce non-discrimination rules by consolidating a number of "equal employment" activities in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, to create a Federal Emergency Management Agency for the improvement of emergency preparedness, to abolish the Civil Service Commission by splitting its functions into two new agencies (the Office of Personnel Management and the Merit System Protection Board) and to clarify the responsibilities of the Departments of Treasury and Labor for administering the Employee

---

[39]"Annual Message to Congress, January 19, 1978," Public Papers of the Presidents: Jimmy Carter, 1978, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1979), 108.

[40]Conley and Havemann, "Reorganization," 1872-73.

Retirement Income Security Act of 1974.[41] The 1979 plans included the establishment of an Office of Federal Inspector for the Alaska Natural Gas Transportation System, an International Development Cooperation Agency to coordinate government activities relating to the developing world, the consolidation of various trade functions into an Office of U.S. Trade Representative and the clarification of the responsibilities of the Department of Commerce. Finally, the last plan, submitted in 1980, increased the authority of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the powers of its chair.[42]

While Carter's efforts at reorganization were obviously far reaching, they quickly developed into a struggle with Congress over "turf" between agencies. Harrison Wellford discovered there was very little "unidentified territory" between agencies, and that each reorganization proposal meant a protracted set of negotiations between the affected agencies and members of Congress.[43] Carter had much greater success with his second element of reform, the proposal to change the Civil Service Commission and the creation of a Merit System Protection Board, designed to guarantee the neutrality of civil service appointments, and the Office of Personnel

---

[41]Dempsey, "Carter's Reorganization," 75; Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 328.
[42]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 328-29.
[43]Joel Havemann, "Carter's Reorganization Plans - Scrambling for Turf," National Journal 10 (May 20, 1978): 788.

Management to serve as a staff agency on personnel (although the function of both would be radically altered by the Reagan administration, as the next chapter will demonstrate). The reforms also created a Senior Executive Service, a pool of movable administrative executives at the senior level, as well as a new set of guidelines for performance appraisal. Although these reforms did manage to pass through Congress, pressure to compromise on many issues threatened to reduce their effectiveness.[44] Only a major lobbying effort by Carter managed to fend off many of the challenges to the administration's reform efforts, and Carter found his efforts were benefited (and perhaps saved) by a public which supported reform.[45]

Thus, the Carter administration began with a commitment to reform the bureaucracy, and Carter immediately sought to meet that commitment by requesting expanded presidential authority to reorganize the federal bureaucracy. But these structural changes were unable to improve Carter's ability to govern well by achieving the goals of efficiency and "compassion" he professed in 1976. Indeed, the proposals themselves were traditional in their conception and appeared quite contradictory as they centralized agency and executive control of reform while simultaneously pursuing a "bottom-up" strategy for agenda

---

[44]Jack Knott and Gary Miller, Reforming Bureaucracy: The Politics of Institutional Change (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1987), 242-47.

[45]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 333-35.

setting.[46] In other words, the Carter reforms failed to secure presidential control over the reform effort and left many despairing Carter's focus on the political details of reform while ignoring the ends to which the political system may be used.[47]

B. The Zero Based Alternative: Carter's Budget Policy

Like reorganization, Carter's plan to reform the budget process was a major issue in the 1976 campaign. The zero based budgeting plan Carter proposed as a reform measure, however, was a well rehearsed concept.[48] Carter began championing the plan to use zero based budgeting (ZBB) to set executive priorities in speeches to the National Press Club on February 9, 1973, during the Law Day Celebration at the University of Georgia in May 1974, and at the National Governor's Conference the following month. In his standard speech delivered to these groups, Carter described the reorganization program he used to streamline Georgia's executive branch (the antecedent to the reorganization effort described in the previous sec-

---

[46]Beam, "Public Administration is Alive and Well," 75.
[47]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 336.
[48]There seems to be some dispute concerning the hyphenation of "zero based budgeting"; while some writers provide hyphens, I choose to follow the spelling used by the Carter White House, which omits them.

tion). Key to that effort, he argued, was a program of zero based budgeting, in which "..every program, existing and proposed, must now vie for funding in the new budget on an equal level. Every single dollar spent..must be justified if it is to be recommended by the governor for funding in the following year's budget."[49] ZBB was to provide a mechanism for strict scrutiny of government activities. Such scrutiny would not come from above, however, as had been the case in previous budget reform measures. Instead, the ZBB strategy called for scrutiny from below.

The goal of the ZBB plan in Georgia, Carter stated, was the restoration of citizen control over state spending: with a zero based budget plan in place, any citizen would be able to monitor any aspect of state activity. Additionally, state agents at the lower levels of the administrative chain of command would be able to provide input into the formulation and prioritizing of agency action (in effect, a "bottom-up" strategy for budgeting). Carter cited similar claims for his budgeting reform on a national level, telling Labor Department employees in the first weeks of his administration that zero based budgeting "..strips down your department's activities every year to zero. You start from scratch...The second thing it does is it lets employees

---

[49] Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. I, (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1978), 19.

deep within the department have an input into the budgetary system each year."[50] In the end, Carter concluded, ZBB meant more open government.[51]

The concept of zero based budgets was simple to grasp. Carter was first attracted to the idea after reading an article by Peter Pyhrr, the originator of the plan, in 1971.[52] As Daniel Ogden, Jr. explains, the budget process has two main steps:

> In theory, zero based budgeting calls for total cost analysis of all programs every year. Each item of expenditure is to be scrutinized to see if it can be reduced or eliminated. Thus, zero base budgeting has two distinctive characteristics. First, budget requests are formulated in "decision packages" in each management

---

[50]"Questions and Answer Session with Department of Labor Employees," Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I, 1977, 106. Carter repeated the same message later that day (February 9, 1977) to employees of the Commerce Department, and on subsequent days to employees in the Departments of Treasury (February 10) and HEW (February 16). See 130-132, 159-166.

[51]"Questions and Answer Session With Department of Labor Employees," 19-21; see also Jimmy Carter, "Zero-Base Budgeting," Zero Base Budgeting Comes of Age, ed. Logan Cheek (New York: AMACOM, 1977), 296-303.

[52]Peter Phyrr, "Zero-Base Budgeting," Harvard Business Review 49 (November/December 1970): 111-21. For a lengthy description of the plan for ZBB, see Phyrr, Zero Base Budgeting (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973) and "The Zero-Base Approach to Government Budgeting," Public Administration Review 37 (January/February 1977): 1-8; see also Graeme Taylor, "Introduction to Zero-Base Budgeting," Contemporary Approaches to Public Budgeting, ed. Fred Kramer (Cambridge: Winthrop Publishers, 1979) 149-61 and Joseph Woley, Zero-Base Budgeting and Program Evaluation (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1978).

> unit. A minimum package, in which all existing functions must be justified at the lowest practical level of operation, forms the first block. Additional decision packages offer more program results for greater costs, bringing the total budget proposals to successively higher levels, some below the current level, one which might be at the existing level, and others which represent increased support. Second, each unit manager ranks all "decision packages" by priority and each successively higher manager similarly ranks packages across program lines clear to the top of the organization.[53]

By implementing this plan, Carter stressed throughout his campaign and in his first debate with Gerald Ford, ZBB would eliminate "obsolete" or "obsolescent" programs which could not justify their existence.[54] Through a "bottom-up" approach to budgeting, where the individuals closest to the agency's operations would have the greatest influence in funding decisions, Carter promised to return control of the federal government to the people.[55]

Carter kept his campaign pledge almost immediately after taking office by announcing an executive order to

---

[53]Daniel Odgen, Jr., "Beyond Zero Based Budgeting," Public Administration Review 38 (November/December 1978): 528.
[54]Presidential Campaign, 1976, Volume 3 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1979), 69.
[55]Frank Draper and Bernard Pitsvada, "ZBB - Looking Back After Ten Years," Public Administration Review 41(January/February 1981): 78.

begin zero based budgeting in all federal agencies.[56] Indeed, Carter became involved in nearly all aspects of ZBB integration into the budget process, believing it to be crucial to his broader plan for reorganization discussed in the previous section.[57] On February 14, 1977, Carter delivered a Valentine's Day message to the heads of all federal departments and agencies, ordering them to "..develop a zero base system in accordance with instructions to be issued by the Office of Management and Budget." Wasting no time, Budget Director Bert Lance met that same day with the new Cabinet members and briefed them on the ZBB objectives.[58] On March 21, guidelines for ZBB planning were sent to the departments.[59] OMB quickly followed by issuing a directive to implement the ZBB plan on April 19, 1977 (Number 77-9); the directive was quickly obeyed, to the surprise of many observers.[60] To facilitate the transition, OMB even provided ZBB liaison officers who were given a brief "pep talk" by the Presi-

---

[56]Executive Order, "Implementation of the Concept of Zero Base Budgeting," Box FI-7, WHCF-Finance 2/11/77-2/15/77, Jimmy Carter Library.

[57]Donald Haider, "Zero Base; Federal Style," Public Administration Review 37 (July/August, 1977): 400, 405-406.

[58]Haider, "Zero Base," 401.

[59]Joel Havemann, "Taking Up the Tools to Tame the Bureaucracy," National Journal 9 (April 2, 1977): 515.

[60]Allen Schick, "The Road From ZBB," Public Administration Review 38 (March/April 1978): 177.

dent before they were sent out to advise agencies on the new procedures.[61]

As with reorganization, Carter insisted citizens play a role in making budget decisions under zero based budgeting. Shortly after issuing his Valentine message, Carter instructed the department and agency heads to encourage participation by state and local government officials in their budget process, particularly when the issue substantially affected local concerns, as well as those of individual citizens.[62] The major focus of ZBB, however, remained at the agency level. While citizens rarely called in budget recommendations (as they called in reorganization suggestions), Carter argued citizen participation would come in the form of observation: by eliminating secrecy from the budget process, citizens could help rank priorities.[63] Thus, Carter pursued budget reform with traditional goals of economy and efficiency in mind, but did so to achieve a more critical goal in the process. As Carter told Department of Interior employees during his first month in office,

> I want to make sure that our Government is more economical and efficient, better organized, better administered, more competent. At the same time, I

---

[61]Haider, "Zero Base," 401.

[62]Memo, Jimmy Carter to Bert Lance, March 8, 1977, "Zero Base Budgeting Guidelines," Box FI-7, WHCF-Finance, Jimmy Carter Library.

[63]Presidential Campaign, 1976 Volume I, 1978, 19-20.

> want to make sure that our government is closer to the people and more sensitive to their needs; that we can correct a sense of fear or despair or alienation or disappointment or prejudice or hatred, and substitute for those characteristics the national inclinations of the people of this country.[64]

As the Carter administration entered its second full year in office, however, many began to wonder if the easy transition to ZBB procedures suggested the "new reform" was nothing new at all. Although Budget Director Lance had previously indicated ZBB would create money to apply to other programs and help to eliminate some programs, but not balance the budget, Carter held out hope that a balanced budget could be achieved through ZBB procedures.[65] Carter began the year with his Fiscal Year 1979 Budget Message, delivered on January 23, 1978, claiming that thanks to ZBB procedures the government had "..gained a better understanding of federal programs and have made better, more evenhanded judgments;" Carter made no claims of ZBB success beyond this pedagogic function, however.[66] Indeed, he seemed to hedge on the success of ZBB in an

---

[64]"Questions and Answers with Department of Interior Employees," Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I, 1977, 198.

[65]Memo, Bert Lance to Jimmy Carter, April 29, 1977, "The Long-Range Budget Outlook," Box FI-7, WHCF-Finance, Jimmy Carter Library.

[66]President Carter, 1978 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1979), 76.

interview with a group of editors and news directors ten days earlier, when he told them "It [ZBB] worked out well for us. I think it will get even better in subsequent years because of experience with it."[67] A more careful examination of that budget revealed few changes from the previous year. In fact, federal spending remained at the same level in 1977 that it would have reached without the new budgeting procedure.[68] Even Carter seemed worried about the lack of movement in the budget, telling the heads of departments and agencies in a gently worded memorandum:

> ..some agencies did better than others. Most agencies need to focus more attention on objectives and on ways to accomplish those objectives more efficiently. In addition, I think more emphasis should be placed on the examination of minimum levels, so I ask that you make additional efforts to do this."[69]

An OMB review of the new ZBB plan, "Assessment of the First Year of Zero-Based Budgeting," released in May, confirmed this impression when it failed to mention a single

---

[67]"Interview with a Group of Editors and News Directors, January 13, 1978," Public Papers of the Presidents: Jimmy Carter, 1978, Vol. I (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1979), 69.

[68]Schick, "The Road From ZBB," 177.

[69]Untitled Memo, Jimmy Carter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, April 14, 1978, Box FG-2, WHCF, Jimmy Carter Library.

specific instance of savings as a result of the new reform; even the minimum levels of proposed spending under ZBB plans cut agency budgets by only 10-15%.[70] An earlier National Journal interview with the budget officials of all Cabinet departments uncovered nearly unanimous disapproval of the ZBB approach. The budget director for the Treasury Department, Arthur Kallen, went on the record stating "No matter what OMB says about going back to zero, we've been nibbling at the margins."[71] During that previous year, agencies faithfully following ZBB procedures still frequently lobbied the Appropriations Committees of Congress to restore their reduced budgets to the previous year's levels.[72]

The departure of Lance as OMB Director created even more problems for ZBB: program "liberals" who wished to increase government services clashed with fiscal "conservatives" within the administration, firing off memos to one another debating budget policy. As a result, whatever minimal control OMB was able to exercise over ZBB was quickly lost.[73] Rumors began to spread among federal

---

[70]Draper and Pitsvada, "ZBB," 77.

[71]Joel Havemann, "The Budget - A Tax Cut, Little Else," National Journal 10 (January 28, 1978): 129.

[72]Memo, Joe Onek to Stuart Eizenstat, May 9, 1977, "Soaring Appropriations," Box FI-7, WHCG-FI 4 5/1/77-5/31/77, Jimmy Carter Library.

[73]Colin Campbell, Managing the Presidency (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 177-80. See also Charles Jones, The Trusteeship Presidency (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1988), 91-93.

agencies that changes in the economy would undermine Carter's budget policy. Carter had to issue a memo to the department and agency heads denying the rumors and ordering them to continue to use ZBB.[74] By 1980, even the minimum levels of many agencies were set above the previous year's appropriations.[75] The 1981 budget fared no better, continuing the pattern set in 1980.[76] To a large degree, the federal budget looked exactly as it had before ZBB procedures were adopted. No one could argue with the fact that ZBB had failed to cut expenditures significantly or streamline the federal government.[77]

The reasons for the ultimate failure of zero based budgeting to achieve the reforms Carter sought were apparent to most. Indeed, a 1962 study of budgeting by the principles used by ZBB in the Department of Agriculture by Aaron Wildavsky and Arthur Hammond predicted many of the troubles the Carter administration experienced during the late 1970's.[78] For all its apparent simpli-

---

[74]Memo, Jimmy Carter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, August 2, 1979, "The Administration's Budgetary Policy," Box FG-4, WHCF-Federal Government-Organizations, Jimmy Carter Library.

[75]Howard Shuman, Politics and the Budget (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 39.

[76]Glenn Pascall, The Trillion Dollar Budget (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 17-20.

[77]"It's a Long Way to October," Economist 274 (February 2, 1980): 29-30.

[78]Aaron Wildavsky and Arthur Hammond, "Comprehensive Versus Incremental Budgeting in the Department of Agriculture," Administrative Science Quarterly 10 (May 1965): 321-46.

city, ZBB was a confusing, incoherent system of budgeting. Despite calls for ZBB reform by the General Accounting Office in 1979, the Carter administration remained constant in its support of ZBB in its original form.[79] The directives from OMB were vaguely worded, and terms like "decision units," central to successful ZBB procedures, were ill defined, if at all. Those who attempted to adhere closely to the guidelines found they often had to consider hundreds, and even thousands, of decisions units.[80] In addition, the ranking of programs was accomplished through a variety of procedures, not all using the same standards or system.[81] Even the term "zero based" made little practical sense to the agencies charged with implementing the new plan, since each agency invariably used the previous year's budget to construct the new fiscal year's requests. With no other plan or guideline from the administration linking the departments of the executive branch together in an overall budget plan, managers relied on old habits.[82]

---

[79]Haider, "Zero Base," 402-5. Donald Axelrod, Budgeting for Modern Government (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 300.

[80]Havemann, "The Budget," 130.

[81]Schick, "The Road From ZBB," 178.

[82]Thomas Lauth, "Zero-Base Budgeting in Georgia State Government: Myth and Reality," Public Administration Review 38 (September/October 1978): 420. Ogden, "Beyond Zero Based Budgeting," 528. This was most clearly a problem for social service agencies, as documented by Campbell, Managing the Presidency, 1986, 173-74.

In the end, managers found themselves called upon to justify each program request, all on an inflexible schedule which gave them little time to organize and reflect upon a new set of objectives for their agency.[83] Lengthy bulletins from OMB began to arrive in agencies shortly after ZBB first went into effect, describing additional classification requirements for agency submission by specifying additional subfunctions of each agency decision package. Thus, the originally complex instructions for ZBB were frequently made more complex as agencies struggled to comply.[84] Administrative "horror stories" began to emerge almost immediately under the new ZBB requirements: One agency reported a 300% increase in the amount of documentation needed for budget preparations, increasing its output of paper from 22,500 pages to a startling 90,000 pages to justify 478 decision packages (approximately 190 pages per project).[85] Others reported large amounts of time were spent on budgeting alone. Gary Dietrich, the Director of Management and Operations for the Office of Water and Hazardous Materials in the

---

[83]Richard Watson and Norman Thomas, The Politics of the Presidency (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 308-9; see also Setting National Priorities: The 1978 Budget, ed. Joseph Pechman (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977), 382-83.

[84]OMB Bulletin Number 77-12, Bert Lance to Heads of Executive Departments and Establishments, "Additional Subfunctioning Coding of Decision Units," Box FI-8, WHCF, Finance 8/21/77-8/31/77, Jimmy Carter Library.

[85]Axelrod, Budgeting for Modern Government, 1988, 297.

Environmental Protection Agency told one interviewer "It [the ZBB process] was 12-hour days, six or seven days a week. It does take its toll." Another staffer was quoted as claiming "We spent so much time on the budget that a lot of other things slipped."[86]

As a result, programs financed through ZBB became a permanent part of the federal bureaucracy, the opposite effect ZBB was meant to have on the executive branch. Once a program was funded, its objectives could not be changed without gravely risking the entire financial support of the agency. Thus, managers learned to "play it safe" and were careful not to alter programs in their agencies, sacrificing the goal of "streamlining" to caution. EPA was widely praised as the agency making the greatest effort to follow ZBB procedures, but it showed very little change by the end of the ZBB process. As one EPA budget official put it, "If we did the best job in the government, I'd hate to see what the rest of the government did."[87]

Carter's plan to reform budget procedures using zero based budgeting ultimately had the opposite effect. As Aaron Wildavsky and Jack Knott observe:

---

[86]Joel Havemann, "The Tale of How One Agency Used ZBB - And Lived to Tell About It," National Journal 10 (February 18, 1978): 268.

[87]Havemann, "The Tale of How One Agency Used ZBB," 265.

> Imagine one of us deciding whether to buy a tie or kerchief. A simple task, one might think. Suppose, however, that organizational rules mandate comprehensiveness; we are required to alter our entire wardrobe as a unit. If everything must be rearranged when one item is altered, the probability is low that we will do anything. Being caught between revolution (change in everything) and resignation (change in nothing) has little to recommend it. Yet this is what a zero-base, start-from-scratch, comprehensive approach requires. If one could actually start from scratch each year, the only zero part of the budget would be its predictability, for zero-base budgeting is ahistorical...Everything at every period is subject to searching scrutiny. As a result, calculations become unmanageable. Figuring out how everything relates to everything else or, worse still, how other things would look if most things were changed, defeats every best effort. Consequently, attempts to apply intelligence to programs about which something can and needs to be done are defeated by mounds of paper. The trivial drowns out the important because if everything must be examined, nothing can receive special attention.[88]

Rather than simplifying government, ZBB guaranteed complexity; rather than "streamline" government, ZBB further entrenched the bureaucracy. ZBB failed to meet any of its goals as a budget policy.

---

[88]Jack Knott and Aaron Wildavsky, "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing," The Wilson Quarterly (Winter 1977): 58.

C. Explaining the Carter Decisions: "Classic" Studies

Traditional political science offers two "classic" explanations for presidential behavior, as described in Chapter One. In this section, the "rational decider" and "personality" models will be applied to Carter's choice of strategy for reorganization and budget reform. The "rational decider" model will be tested by applying the theory of its proponent, Richard Neustadt, to Carter's choices. Similarly, the "personality" model will be tested by applying the theory of its proponent, James David Barber, to Carter's choices. Both explanations will be found to inadequately account for Carter's decisions.

1. The "Rational Decider:" Carter as Calculator

Neustadt's conception of the "rational decider" presidency finds explaining Carter's decisions difficult. Recall Neustadt's argument that presidents must consider the political costs and benefits of each decision, deciding when to risk the favorable perception of reputation and prestige. Presidents act when the political benefits of the decision outweigh these costs, thus enhancing reputation and prestige and increasing the power to persuade.

Given this understanding of presidential behavior, one might expect Neustadt to argue Carter's decision to seek reorganization through a "bottom-up" approach was shaped by a rational decision on Carter's part to attempt to build a successful record of reform to maximize his influence as a new president. Certainly administration advocates of a "bottom-up" strategy thought this would be the effect. However, Neustadt does not specifically address Carter's reorganization efforts.[89] Peri Arnold does discuss reorganization using the Neustadt model when he argues presidents pursue reorganization attempts because such efforts enhance the ability to persuade.[90]

The record shows the opposite to be the case, however, when one considers the Carter example: Carter's efforts were a costly expenditure of political reputation

---

[89]Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1980), 212-20 comes closest to such a discussion.

[90]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 351-52. Indeed, the structure of Carter's reorganization effort closely resembled the recommendations for success made by Neustadt; see Neustadt, Presidential Power, 1980, 219. Others who adopt the Neustadt model for explaining presidential behavior openly begin by taking ideology as a given; for example, Barbara Kellerman's discussion of leadership begins by presuming presidents have their goals in mind before they exercise leadership techniques; Barbara Kellerman, The Political Presidency (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), x. These assumptions separate ideas from action, however, by failing to consider why political beliefs might lead a president to select certain administrative strategies for action. For this reason, they also suffer from the defects of the "rational decider" model.

for very little political benefit over a long period of time, a seemingly "irrational" political act.[91] Reorganization became a frustrating exercise for Carter: although he did achieve some legislative success with his yearly reorganization plans, the political cost he paid make them pyrrhic victories at best. Rather than enhance his reputation, political squabbling, made possible by the fragmentation of authority inherent in his "bottom-up" strategy, eroded Carter's reputation as an administrator who could get reorganization accomplished. The Neustadt model cannot account for Carter's behavior since it does not anticipate the possibility that presidents may be drawn to certain administrative strategies for reasons other than a "rational" calculation of costs and benefits. In other words, the Neustadt model cannot explain why Carter would pursue a strategy with no apparent political benefit and fraught with political danger (loss of the power to persuade) - and that he would do so over a long

---

[91]Carter's own Georgia experience suggested these efforts would fail since he failed to realize his reorganization goals at that time as well; Robert Shogun, Promises to Keep (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977), 34; Gary Fink, Prelude to the Presidency (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980), 116; Bruce Mazlish and Edwin Diamond, Jimmy Carter: A Character Portrait (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 199-200. Consider also the resistance of Carter's own staff to continuing reorganization plans and Carter's insistence that they go on; Dennis Riley, Controlling the Federal Bureaucracy (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 42; Peter Szanton, Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? (New York: Chatham House Publishers, 1981), 5.

period of time.[92] Carter's "objective" appears to be outside the bounds of rationality.

Similarly, one might expect Neustadt to argue Carter's decision to streamline the federal government and open the budget process to political debate through a zero based budgeting plan was a rational decision on Carter's part, seeking to build a successful record of reform and maximize his influence as a new president.[93] Arnold does note ZBB was an important element of Carter's plan, mentioned in the previous paragraph, to reorganize government to enhance his ability to persuade. Thus, the link between reorganization and ZBB suggests both were strategies employed to similar ends.[94]

A closer examination of the Carter record shows this was hardly the case, however. Carter pursued a method of budget reform which failed to achieve any of the goals he set for it, while creating the political liability of a growing federal budget and fragmenting presidential power, an "irrational" political act by Neustadt's standards. The "bottom-up" approach as applied to budgeting, as with

---

[92]Thus, I would argue, Carter can hardly be seen simply making a mistake in judgement. Although a fine line certainly exists between judgmental error and more self-destructive actions, it is difficult to excuse or explain Carter's continued efforts at reorganization as a judgmental miscalculation.

[93]Neustadt does not directly address Carter's budget plans; as note 63 mentions, the discussion at 212-20 comes closest to this subject.

[94]Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 315-16.

reorganization, guaranteed a variety of parochial forces would gain strength as the ability of the president to create coherent, goal oriented change disappeared.[95] Without a forum for debate over policy priorities among the various agencies and political bodies, the Carter administration found it lacked any sense of direction.[96] By 1978, even Carter's own Office of Management and Budget had failed to justify the ZBB reforms using any objective standard for success. Despite this conclusion, Carter never wavered in his support for ZBB. Indeed, he even advocated expanding ZBB through multi-year plans, putting even more of the budget out of his direct control.[97] The Neustadt model thus cannot account for Carter's budget decisions. In the end, Carter risked his power to persuade on an objective which he appears to have had no rational reason to support.[98]

---

[95]Draper and Pitsvada, "ZBB," 78.

[96]Mark Vessel, "Zero-Base Budgeting: Setting National Priorities Through the Ranking Process," Public Administration Review 38 (November/December 1978): 524.

[97]Schick, "The Road From ZBB," 180.

[98]An excellent example of the problematic conclusion arising from such an approach can be found in James Benze, Jr., Presidential Power and Management Techniques (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 55-75. Benze attempts to interpret Carter's actions within a framework of enhancing power, much as Neustadt argues (although Benze is less than explicit about using Neustadt's approach). In the end, Benze must admit to being confused as to why Carter would pursue "bottom-up" reorganization and zero based budgeting.

2. "Personality:" The "Active-Positive" Carter?

James David Barber's discussion of Carter places him in the "active-positive" category; these presidents are characterized by Barber as presidents who possess

> ...an orientation toward productiveness as a value and an ability to use his styles flexibly, adaptively, suiting the dance to the music. He sees himself as developing over time toward relatively well defined personal goals - growing toward his image of himself as he might yet be. There is an emphasis on rational mastery, on using the brain to move the feet.[99]

Like Neustadt, Barber neglects to address Carter's reorganization efforts directly in his discussion of the Carter presidency. Barber might conclude, however, that Carter's persistence in achieving his goals was the result of an active-positive president doggedly trying to achieve an important goal through a results-producing method.

The limitations of Barber's single unit of analysis, character, is evident when one considers Carter's reorganization efforts, however. Those efforts were hardly a productive activity for Carter. In fact, Carter's desire to pursue a failed policy, despite the evidence of failure

---

[99]James David Barber, Presidential Character, 3rd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 9.

and the counsel of his closest advisers, resembles the behavior of an "active-negative" president.[100] Nor does Carter's "bottom-up" strategy reflect a desire to pursue clear goals: instead, simply allowing problems to "emerge" as one attempts to reform the bureaucracy explains how one will conduct reorganization efforts but tells nothing about what is to be reorganized or why.[101]

One might explain Barber's trouble accounting for Carter's behavior by arguing Barber merely misclassified Carter in the character scheme, that Carter is indeed an "active-negative," like Richard Nixon. Barber describes this personality type as possessing

> ..a compulsive quality, as if the man were trying to make up for something or to escape from anxiety into hard work. He seems ambitious, striving upward, power seeking. His stance toward the environment is aggressive and he has a persistent problem in managing his aggressive feelings... Life is a hard struggle to achieve and hold power, hampered by the condem-

---

[100]Carter makes no claims to success in his own biography, a rather startling fact when one considers the time he spent on reorganization; his account presents the Georgia record instead and focuses on the goal of reorganization alone. Jimmy Carter, Keeping Faith (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 68-71.

[101]Memo, Keith Miles to Peter Szanton, "The Carter Reorganization Project." Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency, 1986, 330. Harold Seidman and Robert Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 114-15.

nations of a perfectionist conscience.[102]

Barber provides a rather lengthy refutation of Carter's characterization as an "active-negative" elsewhere in his book.[103] Additionally, the "bottom-up" strategy, with its emphasis on transferring the power to direct administrative reform to the service level rather than toward the president, would hardly seem appropriate to a president who has a character need to enhance his power. But neither classification adequately explains Carter's behavior. Rather than simply a matter of misclassification, the troubles with Barber's analysis are problems in methodology, not application. While Barber's analysis does move beyond the Neustadt model in considering reasons why presidents might choose administrative strategies which seem "irrational" (in terms of maximizing political power), his analysis of character must rely on the same "self-fulfilling" assumption built into the Neustadt approach. Barber assumes Carter's goals were those of any president seeking change, to promote some policy end, and then uses selected elements of Carter's past to explain why he chose to attempt such reform. But as the earlier analysis suggests, Carter sought reorganization not as a

---

[102]Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, 1986.
[103]Seidman and Gilmour, Politics, Position and Power, 1986, 401-37.

means to a policy end but to a procedural goal determined by his political beliefs. In this sense, Barber is looking in the wrong place for data useful for explaining Carter's behavior, and thus neither of his classifications can account for Carter's decision to seek reorganization through a "bottom-up" strategy.

Although Carter's zeal in pursuing budget reform would also seem to confirm Barber's classification of Carter as an "active-positive" president, the effect of ZBB clearly indicates Carter was pursuing a failed budget policy.[104] Indeed, the "clear goals" sought by active-positives were notably and fatally missing in ZBB procedures: there was no political control over the outcome of the budget process, no clear method for achieving budget reform, and no guide for national policy.[105] The "bottom-up approach thwarted any attempt on Carter's part to provide coherence to the budget, and the vague language in the OMB directives establishing ZBB simply could not provide clear goals to individual managers.[106] Zero based budgeting suffered from the same flaws attending Carter's other "bottom-up" strategy and, like the reorganization plan, was precisely the wrong plan for an "active-positive" (or "active-negative") to accept with an unlimited and unqualified grant of support.

---

[104]Haider, "Zero Base," 402.
[105]Vessel, "Zero-Base Budgeting," 524.
[106]Draper and Pitsvada, "ZBB," 78.

D. Explaining the Carter Decisions: "Belief Systems"

The "rational decider" and "personality" models cannot adequately account for Carter's decision to pursue administrative reform by the strategies described earlier in this chapter. This section will attempt to account for those decisions using the "belief systems" model explained in Chapter One. By assessing the influence of political beliefs on Carter's selection of reorganization and budgeting through a "bottom-up" strategy, this chapter will argue that a better explanation for these administrative choices can be discovered.

Most observers have mistakenly concluded Carter is a president without any philosophy, a "pragmatist" who holds no central beliefs. Carter seemed to encourage such conclusions by claiming to be neither liberal nor conservative during his August 23, 1976 campaign speech at the Town Hall Forum in Los Angeles:

> In the last analysis, good government is not a matter of being liberal or conservative. Good government is the art of doing what is right, and that is far more difficult. To be liberal or conservative requires only ide-

> ology; to do what is right requires sensitivity and wisdom.[107]

A closer examination of this argument reveals the "bias trap" described in Chapter One: each observer applies a category ("liberal" or "conservative"), uses a predetermined set of policy positions to define that category, and concludes since Carter fits in neither category comfortably he must be without beliefs, mistakenly labeling him "pragmatic."[108] If one draws on Carter himself as the source for his own "belief system," a recognizable pattern of "primitive beliefs" emerges in Carter's speeches and private papers. Carter does believe in the simple power of reason, to be sure, but this logical thinking is a means to a political end, not a belief (or the absence of belief) itself. It is procedure, and not the particulars of policy, which captures Carter's attention.[109] Instead, Carter believes that the relationship between the government and its citizens is the most fundamental and crucial factor for the functioning of democracy. Nearly every action taken by the government is judged by Carter on a

---

[107]Jimmy Carter, A Government as Good as Its People (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977), 140.

[108]See, for example, the discussion in Kandy Stoud, How Jimmy Won (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1977), 11-13 and Jules Witcover, Marathon (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 207, 225. Many mistook Carter's hatred for ideological "boxes" as an admission of "pragmatism" without realizing pragmatism is itself an ideology. Presidential Campaign, 1976 Vol. I, 1978, 99-100.

[109]Knott and Wildavsky, "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing," 49.

standard of benefit to individuals, and Carter consistently argues government must accurately reflect the people themselves.[110]

Many of Carter's speeches focus on the "people" and their importance for government. Like Woodrow Wilson, the needs and desires of the public, what is best for the nation and how government can best serve to provide both, is a constant theme for Carter and the most important problem for government to resolve.[111] Included in this service is the importance of being democratically accountable and allowing the people to make their own decisions.[112] As he stated in his inaugural speech as Georgia governor, Carter considers the people to be the most important source of action for the government: their active role gives the government energy and direction. The sole measure of desirable or effective political action, Carter argues, is the effect that action has on the people government is meant to serve.[113]

The link between the government and the people thus takes on the greatest priority in Carter's belief system.

---

[110]Carter, Why Not the Best?, 1975, 9.

[111]While Carter never specifically discussed the intellectual antecedents of his political beliefs, save an admiration for Reinhold Niebuhr and Bob Dylan, he did feel a sense of kinship to Wilson's beliefs after reading the former president's first inaugural address. See Carter, Keeping Faith, 1982, 19.

[112]Mazlish and Diamond, Jimmy Carter: A Character Portrait, 1979, 257. Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. I, 1978, 822-23.

[113]Carter, A Government as Good as Its People, 1977, 106.

Indeed, Carter describes that link as "fundamental" to government, one of his "deeply held beliefs" that had characterized his decision making throughout his life.[114] He argued during the campaign that this connection had been lost, claiming

> When government becomes cut off from its people, when its leaders are talking only to themselves instead of addressing reality, then it is time for a process of national self-renewal, time to look outside the existing governing class for new leaders with new ideas.[115]

Thus, the Carter promise was to reestablish communication between the government and its people, not merely to adopt a particular set of policies.

According to Carter, the most important task for governance is the maintenance of this link, describing it as "crucial" to bringing a "closeness and an intimacy between leaders who have been elected and the people who put them into office."[116] One of Carter's often repeated phrases, almost a litany, explains the only way to guarantee the government will be "honest, decent, open, fair and compassionate" will be to have it reflect the people. As president, Carter clearly believed he had a special

---

[114]Carter, A Government as Good as Its People, 1977, 7-8.
[115]Carter, A Government as Good as Its People, 1977, 141.
[116]"Questions and Answers in Clinton, Massachusetts Town Meeting," Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I, 1978, 396.

duty to discover and reflect the people's will. As Knott and Wildavsky explain:

> In order to reflect the people's will, the best way to organize government is to make it democratic at the bottom and centralized at the top. The President, then, as chief hierarch and ultimate definer of the public interest, leaps over group interests through direct contact with the populace. President Carter would rather interpret the inchoate desires of the mass of people than bargain over who gets what the government offers.[117]

As Carter himself explained, "The American people are competent. I see no reason why our government shouldn't be competent. The American people are fair. I see no reason why our government shouldn't be fair. The American people tell the truth. I see no reason why our government should conceal the truth or lie."[118] Government loses those qualities, however, when it becomes distanced from the people, isolated from their problems and unresponsive to their needs.[119]

As a candidate, Carter spent a great deal of time conversing with the public and, as he claimed, learning

---

[117]Knott and Wildavsky, "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing," 63.

[118]Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. I, 1978, 822.

[119]Carter, A Government as Good as Its People, 1977, 145. Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. 1, 1977, 407-9.

from them.[120] Even cynical observers of Carter's candidacy like Jules Witcover were impressed by Carter's sincere desire to understand the needs and wants of the public (Witcover contrasts Carter's sincerity to Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon's claim to "listen to the public" as a cynical means to getting elected).[121] As president, Carter's enthusiasm for this principle occasionally created problems for his staff: during a visit to Clinton, Massachusetts, Carter buoyantly asked a television and radio audience to write him personally about the problems they were experiencing with government. In one week alone, the White House was swamped with 87,000 letters, four times the normal amount of mail handled by the staff. At one point, some 315,000 letters sat unopened; some 20,000-30,000 calls were unanswered, including calls from members of Congress and various federal and state officials.[122] Carter also participated in an ambitious, if not somewhat amusing, telephone call-in program with Walter Cronkite on March 5, 1977 (the questions ranged from queries about foreign policy to complaints about particular government services). Carter's

---

[120]"August 10, 1977 Interview with Harry Reasoner and Sam Donaldson for ABC News," Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. II, 1978, 1467.

[121]Jules Witcover, Marathon (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 210. This view of Nixon is certainly consistent with the conclusion in Chapter Two.

[122]Haynes Johnson, In the Absence of Power (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 153.

policy of listening to and consulting with the people was hardly campaign rhetoric: the Carter Administration took an active and vigorous interest in consulting the public.

In addition, the notions of "competence" and "efficiency" are also closely linked to the people in Carter's ideology: far from mere "pragmatism," competence is meant to include a moral element of responsiveness. Even the term "streamlining" is concerned with opening up the governmental process to public scrutiny and not simple efficiency. As one examination of Carter's beliefs put it, "If openness is not a form of godliness for President Carter, it must come close."[123] Carter himself claimed that efficiency is only meaningful if tied to democratic control over administration, claiming "I don't believe that the government can be sensitive to people's needs nor meet those needs effectively unless it is administered well."[124] In a campaign speech in South Bend, Carter argued government competence requires citizen participation to tell administrators where problems exist. He suggested direct telephone conversations between citizens and the government were the best way to ensure "competence" in administration (unlike other descriptions of

---

[123]Knott and Wildavsky, "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing," 53.

[124]"Remarks at a Breakfast Meeting of the Executive Finance Committee of the Democratic National Committee," Public Papers of the Presidents, Jimmy Carter, 1977, Vol. I, 1977, 190.

that term, implying administrative expertise or technology).[125]

Memos concerning reorganization and ZBB continually and consistently emphasized this version of competence. For example, a memo to Carter from PRP Director Pettigrew noted citizen input reaffirmed "..the Administration agenda to make government more competent to deal with problems identified, emphasizing the need to improve government's treatment of <u>people</u>."[126] Carter even suggested during the 1976 campaign that his political guidance and agenda came directly from the people themselves.[127] Jack Knott and Aaron Wildavsky took note of this desire for openness when they examined Carter's theory of governing in 1977:

> Carter's espousal of openness is connected in his own mind with direct access to the people. Just as he favors giving the people open access to governmental decision-making, he plans, as President, to speak directly to them. He values openness "to let the public know what we are doing and to restore the concept in Congress that their constituents are also my constituents. I have just as much right and responsibility to reach the people for support as a member of Congress does." He also said that he plans to restore Franklin D. Roose-

---

[125] <u>Presidential Campaign, 1976</u>, Vol. 1, 1978, 999-1000; 224-25.

[126] Memo, Richard Pettigrew to the President, September 29, 1977.

[127] <u>Presidential Campaign, 1976</u>, Vol. 1, 1978, 734-35.

> velt's "fireside chat," accept "special responsibility to by-pass the big shots" and to act, as it were, as the people's lobbyist. Should his policies be thwarted by special interests, Carter says he will go to the people. At times, Carter identifies himself as the people. In reviewing his experience with consumer legislation in Geor-gia, he said: "The special interest groups prevailed on about half of it. I prevailed - rather the Georgia people prevailed - on the other half."[128]

Thus, the greatest priority for Carter is the establishment of a direct link between the people and the government. Absolutely clear channels of communication must be provided for democracy to work.[129]

The crucial key to this link, Carter concludes, is government reorganization, and with it zero based budgeting as a tool for communication.[130] Whenever Carter substantively discussed reorganization, his views were expressed in terms of government openness and responsiveness, not efficiency. In fact, Carter's position on reorganization during the 1976 campaign repeatedly struck

---

[128]Knott and Wildavsky, "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing," 53.

[129]Carter frequently referred to reorganization and budget reform as his "high priority matter[s]." See Memo, Jimmy Carter to Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, June 29, 1977, "Comprehensive Review of Administrative Services Delivery," [CF, O/A 28][1], Box 270, Domestic Policy Staff Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

[130]Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. I, 1978, 736.

this theme.[131] Although matters of efficiency and management were often mentioned during that campaign, Carter justified reorganization on the grounds that it would bridge the "chasm between the people and government."[132] That chasm was widened by the confusing nature of government, enhancing the power of special interests and further distancing the people. As Carter explained in 1977,

> I want it [government] to work, and I want it to be so that it can be understood by the American people. I want to root out the influence of special interests...And in a complex, confusing bureaucracy, those who are most influential, most knowledgeable, are the ones who can derive unwarranted privilege or benefit. That's not right.[133]

Without reorganization, Carter's belief system implied, government cannot adequately serve its primary communicative function, and would instead communicate only those messages which advantage special interests. Carter maintained the people would "..always have a voice in our deliberations as a government itself."[134] Indeed, the people were to be more than one voice among other in-

---

[131]Elizabeth Drew, American Journal (New York: Random House, 1977), 19.
[132]Carter, A Government as Good as its People, 1977.
[133]"Remarks at a Breakfast Meeting," 190.
[134]Presidential Campaign, 1976, Vol. I, 1978, 293. See also Johnson, In the Absence of Power, 1980, 193.

terests. Carter desired "...a partnership between the people and their government and not a bridge that has to be crossed nor a wall that has to be scaled."[135]

Carter also argued zero based budgeting had played a critical role of facilitating communication between government and citizen during his "Goals for Georgia" campaign in 1971, allowing the people to outline the types of programs they desired and thus creating a standard for ranking various state decision packages; Carter frequently related a story during the campaign (sounding a bit like Reagan) concerning citizen input from the parents of handicapped children and the influence their concerns had over ZBB decisions.[136] This commitment was reflected in the central place in the budget process given to ZBB by Carter from the start of his administration. Indeed, Carter considered public input so important he planned to settle disputes over ZBB goals between his administration and Congress by consulting public opinion.[137] For Carter, ZBB was an act of faith, not traditional budget reform.[138]

Taking into consideration the nature of Carter's belief system, as well as the justification Carter gives for reorganization and budget policy, Neustadt would be

---

[135]"Remarks at a Breakfast Meeting" 191.
[136]Johnson, In the Absence of Power, 1980, 21-22, 410-11.
[137]Johnson, In the Absence of Power, 1980, 419. Schick, "The Road From ZBB," 177-78.
[138]Michael Babunakis, Budget Reform for Government (Westport: Quorum Books, 1982), 11.

better able to account for Carter's behavior and the failure of the administration to live up to the expectations of the public.[139] Such an understanding also explains why Carter would adhere to zero based budgeting as a means of political communication between the public and the government. A greater appreciation for the role of political beliefs in this decision better explains Carter's choice of strategies.

Similarly, James David Barber's analysis might benefit from an understanding of Carter's belief-driven goal of establishing clear avenues of communication between the government and its citizens: for Carter to impose a set of reorganization goals on his efforts (as an

---

[139]Stephen Skowronek also recognizes Carter's reorganization attempt as a politically costly policy; Stephen Skowronek, "Presidential Leadership in Political Time," The Presidency and the Political System, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 121-127. Skowronek explains Carter's decision to pursue reorganization as a moment in "political time" in which leadership consists of establishing credibility in an enervated regime. To gain a "credible leadership posture," Carter campaigned on and organized an outsider's crusade against the "moral degeneration" of politics. However, Skowronek's explanation goes on to define this degeneration only in terms of efficiency, while Carter clearly considered efficiency a byproduct of greater democratic control over government, not an end in itself. Carter's reform is thus described by Skowronek in purely mechanical terms and fails to connect morality to technical issues. This understanding neglects the possibility that the method of reform (the "bottom-up" strategy) may contain the moral aspect of government and may therefore be a goal in and of itself. Why did Carter choose this method and pursue it with such intensity? Skowronek's account does not offer an answer to either question.

"active-positive" might be expected to do) when the very purpose of a "bottom-up" strategy is to receive messages from the public would make little or no sense. Past reorganization plans called for changes which would come from government planners, such as the Ash Council, and not the public; Carter hoped to use reorganization to make government reflect the public and not the planners. Indeed, any other form of reorganization would defeat the very purpose of reform, according to Carter's belief system. The same argument can be applied to the budget process: a "top-down" decision making process for budget planning would close off the very conduit for learning the priorities and needs of the American people by replacing them with those of government planners. Both reorganization and zero based budgeting were critical to the achievement of Carter's goals, but inappropriate for an "active-positive" president.

Political beliefs explain the decisions of Jimmy Carter more completely than the traditional approaches of presidential studies and public administration. As one understands Carter's central beliefs, one can also understand why the strategies of "bottom-up" reorganization and zero based budgeting were selected. Furthermore, the reasons Carter would cling to those strategies even as the evidence of failure was plainly clear to both outside observers and his own staff becomes more understandable when the powerful effect of beliefs on decision

making is considered. Without this understanding, the actions of Carter seem to make no sense; but with this understanding, the exercise of administrative power is better explained.

CHAPTER IV

BELIEF AND "SUCCESS:" THE REAGAN PRESIDENCY

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the deleterious role political beliefs can often play in decision making: led by a strong belief in the importance of citizen input, Jimmy Carter selected a set of administrative strategies which frustrated his attempts to reorganize the federal government and to create a new budget policy. As Minar noted in Chapter One, while it is difficult to prove a belief causes decisions to be made, chiefly because presidents often provide explanations for behavior which strike a "pragmatic" tone, one can associate beliefs with decisions by demonstrating the influence ideas have over the decision maker and re-examining the decision in that light. Certainly this process is easiest to demonstrate when the policy decision has "failed," since the determination of the decider to stick to a strategy which creates failure is difficult to explain by any other means.

A more difficult methodological issue is raised, however, when the decision made by a president leads to "successful" policy, where success is defined as policy which seems to achieve the goals the president sets for action. The language of such a definition is dependent, however, on the "rational decider" model: One assumes "success" has been achieved when goals are reached. If one cannot always determine what the goals were with accuracy, however, the "rational decider" model can only assume they existed based on the end result of the decision. It is this difficulty which confounds discussions of political beliefs.

This chapter examines one "successful" president, Ronald Reagan, and his choices of administrative strategy on reorganization and budgeting. The chapter will argue that while these decisions seem "successful," the results of each decision in fact frustrated Reagan's apparent goals. In other words, Reagan did in fact get what he wanted, but he did so by pursuing a strategy which undermined the explanation and assumed goals found in the "rational decider" and "personality" models. Sections one and two describe those choices and the consequences they produced. Section three again analyzes those decision using these "classic" models, arguing that the goals each model must assume existed in Reagan's mind cannot account for the decisions made by Reagan. The final section will reexamine Reagan's decisions in light of his political

beliefs and will demonstrate the "belief system" model best explains Reagan's behavior. While data on the Reagan administration (unlike those of Nixon and Carter) is restricted to the public press and a limited number of memoirs, a general sense of the role of political beliefs in decision making can be traced, albeit less clearly than in the previous chapters. As more material becomes available, a clearer connection may be established.

A. Reorganizing Administration: The Reagan Record

Ronald Reagan's commitment to controlling the federal bureaucracy, like Nixon's and Carter's, was made quite clear during his campaign for the presidency in 1980. The pride of the Reagan campaign was the candidate's professed belief in "conservative activism:"[1] a willingness to present new ideas for governing while remaining true to conservative principles.[2] Reagan ran his campaign on the promise that he would simplify the government and reduce

---

[1]One should note that the term "conservative" is used here only to describe those whom Reagan believed agreed with his political ideology. The term "conservative" should not be taken to indicate I am now accepting a different use of the term "ideology;" instead, there is no shorthand way to refer to Reagan's belief system. A full definition of what is meant by "conservative" in this context is offered in section four.

[2]Candidates 1980 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980), 58.

its size.[3] Reagan's inaugural address forcefully stated that "..government is not the solution to our problem. Government is the problem" and Reagan was determined to bring the legitimate activities of the federal government under tighter presidential control.[4]

To regain that control, however, Reagan eschewed the traditional tools of earlier administrations in his attempt to reorganize the federal government. For example, while Carter's reorganization took the form of changes in department authority (guided by the "bottom-up" strategy), Reagan argued reorganization itself was a time consuming process which tended to destabilize government rather than improve its performance. Clearly, Reagan's intention was not to completely dismantle the federal government as a set of governing institutions; instead, the administration used limited reorganization plans at the agency level and rejected government-wide programs of restructuring.[5] Even these limited reorganization efforts concentrated action solely in the area of management, leaving the basic structure of the federal agencies intact

---

[3]James Ceaser, "The Theory of Governance of the Reagan Administration," The Reagan Administration and the Governing of America, eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984), 79-80.

[4]Reagan's First Year (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1982), 109.

[5]Chester Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal - The Reagan Presidency: Limited Government and Political Administration," Public Administration Review 43 (January/February 1983): 13.

and avoiding the redrawing of government "organization charts."[6]

In place of traditional reorganization, the Reagan administration substituted a plan for the centralization of the federal government through the upper levels of the executive branch, creating a "clearing house" for administrative action. Rather than divesting agencies of authority, Reagan altered agency practices to give the upper levels of each agency and his own White House staff a firm hand to control agency activity.[7] The plan called for the careful selection of loyal cabinet members whose beliefs were compatible with those of the president, as well as the screening of new appointees for loyalty to the Reagan agenda. While the Reagan plan seemed to be a radical departure from more traditional reorganization reforms, Reagan was following a trend toward the politicization of the bureaucracy which had been developing since the late 1960's (although Reagan was adopting a form of this trend which greatly expanded his control).[8] In essence, the federal government would be recaptured by

---

[6]James L. Garnett, "Operationalizing the Constitution Via Administrative Reorganization: Oilcans, Trends and Proverbs," Public Administration Review 47 (January/February 1987): 38.

[7]Elizabeth Sanders, "The Presidency and the Bureaucratic State," The Presidency and the Political System, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 383-86.

[8]Margaret Wyszomirski, "The De-Institutionalization of Presidential Staff Agencies," Public Administration Review 42 (September/October, 1982): 448-458.

ending the "government of strangers" with the right exercise of executive power, as the critics of Hugh Heclo predicted in Chapter One. As Reagan's Director of the Presidential Personnel Office put it, "..if you are going to run the government, you've got to control the people that come into it."[9]

The task was enormous, as Reagan discovered upon taking office. His own Executive Office had grown to 1700 employees even after Carter's radical restructuring, with an operating budget in excess of 120 million dollars.[10] One of Reagan's first acts as president was a hiring freeze on government employment and the dismissal of many non-partisan, long-term clerical, secretarial and other support personnel from the White House if their loyalty to the Administration's program was at all in question. As Martin Anderson claimed, "They [staff] were treated as Presidential appointments even when they were not. It was also made clear that, with very few exceptions, all incumbent employees should be fired."[11]

---

[9]James Pfiffner, "Political Appointees and Career Executives: The Democracy-Bureaucracy Nexus in the Third Century," Public Administration Review 47 (January/February 1987): 59.

[10]John Burke, "The Institutionalized Presidency," The Presidency and the Political System, ed. Michael Nelson (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988), 355-377.

[11]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 5. Martin Anderson, Revolution (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1988), 199.

In addition to these firings, there were long delays in cabinet level appointments while the administration carefully screened the nominees for their "ideological" loyalties.[12] As Laurence Lynn, Jr., explains:

> The primary qualification for appointment - overshadowing managerial competence and experience or familiarity with issues - appeared to be the extent to which an appointee shared the president's values and would be reliable and persistent both in transfusing these values into agency practices and in executing central directives bound to be unpopular in his or her agency.[13]

The Cabinet also took on a new role in the administration, playing an important, but not leading, role in policy formulation. In this sense, the Reagan administration had an active Cabinet without operating as a "cabinet-style" government: the Cabinet was to act as a broker between elements of the government and was to coordinate the implementation of the Reagan agenda, but would not serve as a decision making body on its own or apart from the President.[14] On the critical economic issues, Reagan

---

[12]Richard Nathan, "The Reagan Presidency in Domestic Affairs," in The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment, ed. Fred Greenstein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 72.

[13]Laurence Lynn, Jr., "The Reagan Administration and the Renitent Bureaucracy," The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America, eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984), 340.

[14]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 5-10.

reserved decision making to himself. However, the administration considered the appointment of Cabinet officials crucial to the successful implementation of that program. In this way, Martin Anderson has argued the "ideologue-pragmatist" battle view of the Reagan policy team fails to capture the White House decision making dynamic.[15] By staffing the Cabinet with loyal supporters, Reagan could have some confidence the members would not become "captured" by their individual departments.

The Reagan plan for recapturing the bureaucracy was also exercised at the agency level. Using the authority Carter had secured in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, Reagan took great care to appoint a conservative to head the Office of Personnel Management.[16] This office, along with the Presidential Personnel Office, placed its greatest priority on the selection of loyal "lower level" employees. Pendleton James elevated the "ideological" selection of appointees to new heights, according to many observers. Although James did consult with the relevant Cabinet members when selecting subcabinet staff members,

---

[15]Anderson, Revolution, 1988, 164, 157-58. Lou Cannon argues a better description would speak of regional (Californians versus non-Californians) or personal (Nancy's allies versus Nancy's foes) divisions. See Lou Cannon, President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1991), 160.

[16]Edie Goldenberg, "The Permanent Government in an Era of Retrenchment and Redirection," The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America, eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984), 384.

the final decision on these appointments rested with the White House.[17] Once appointed, these reliably "Reaganite" members were "blanketed in" by passing a series of new civil service reform laws to confer tenure on the new incumbents.[18]

The new appointees were expected to do more than simply occupy offices. Reagan was counting on them to put pressure on the Cabinet members to "toe the line," a plan for control which had proven successful for Governor Reagan in California.[19] As "Agent Provocateurs," these appointees were given a greater degree of freedom to act as they believed fit, increasing their personal influence while altering the agency for which they labored.[20] If an agency was staffed by long tenured employees not loyal to conservative principles, the administration took steps to "gag" the bureaucrats by limiting their contacts with Congress and the press.[21] In addition, threatened reductions in force (RIFs) and transfers were used to intimidate more recalcitrant employees.[22]

On balance, the efforts of the Reagan administration to bring the federal government under control were vigor-

---

[17]Anderson, Revolution, 1988, 198-99.
[18]Sanders, "The Presidency and the Bureaucratic State," 391-92.
[19]Nathan, "The Reagan Presidency in Domestic Affairs," 76.
[20]Lynn, "The Reagan Presidency and the Renitent Bureaucracy," 355-61.
[21]Reagan's First Year, 1982, 25.
[22]Sanders, "The Presidency and the Bureaucratic State," 394.

ous, far reaching, and remarkably successful. There was little or no dissention within the early administration (although this changed later), according to Martin Anderson, compared to similar periods in other presidencies.[23] While the new appointees may not have always agreed with policy strategies and priorities of the administration, Joel Aberbach and Bert Rockman compared the appointees to those of Richard Nixon and concluded Reagan's appointees maintained a higher degree of agreement with the president on basic questions of political belief.[24] Lacking faith in traditional reorganization approaches, Reagan succeeded in centralizing executive power in the White House by carefully appointing ideological allies in the bureaucracy and intimidating those who did not share the administration's set of beliefs. In this sense, Reagan's reorganization was very different from that of Carter: Reagan required no reorganization plans and therefore no "PRP"; Reagan also required no legislative authority or acquiescence; finally, Reagan achieved his "reorganization" through political, not structural, change. For all these reasons, Reagan created the most politicized administra-

---

[23]Anderson, Revolution, 1988, 200.

[24]M. Stephen Weatherford and Lorraine M. McDonnel, "Ideology and Economic Policy," Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency, ed. Larry Berman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 122-155.

tion since Franklin Roosevelt by changing the personnel, not the structure, of administration.[25]

B. The "Heavy Hand" Alternative: Reagan's Budget Policy

During the 1980 presidential campaign, candidate Reagan outlined his plans for economic change along with his reorganization plans: simplification and reduction of the federal government as part of a pledge to rein in spending while providing citizens with a tax "break" to stimulate economic growth.[26] While the details of supply side economics are unimportant for this discussion, it is important to note the central role budgeting was to play in the Reagan plan for domestic policy. Previous presidents had used budget policies to guide resource allocation, but Reagan redefined the budget process in political terms. Indeed, this section will argue the budget literally became the vehicle for the new "activism."[27]

A large electoral college victory helped Reagan claim a mandate for his "revolution;" however, the gains made by Republicans in the Senate were even more important to

---

[25]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 3.

[26]Reagan's First Year, 1982, 109.

[27]For the best single summary of "supply side" principles, see Paul Roberts, The Supply Side Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

Reagan's legislative plans.[28] Reagan and his advisers realized that action on the budget would have to take place almost immediately if popular support for reform was to be harnessed.[29] To guarantee his success, Reagan centralized decision making in the upper levels of the executive branch (as described in the previous section), formulated his economic policy agenda in a circle of close advisers, and gave a free hand to a trustworthy believer in Reagan's economic principles, Office of Management and Budget Director David Stockman.[30] Stockman quickly realized that the only hope for budget reform lay in avoiding other elements of the administration and Congress, including members of the Cabinet. By establishing a budget working group, Stockman managed to completely eliminate opportunities for obstruction by upper levels of the executive branch.[31] In essence, OMB operated without poli-

---

[28]Hugh Heclo and Rudolph Penner, "Fiscal and Political Strategy in the Reagan Administration," The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment, ed. Fred Greenstein (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982), 24-25. See also Nigel Bowles, The White House and Capital Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 219.

[29]Laurence Barrett, Gambling With History (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1983), 83-84.

[30]Lester Salamon and Alan Abramson, "Governance - The Politics of Retrenchment," The Reagan Record, eds. John Palmer and Isabel Sawhill (Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1984), 40-48. Howard Shuman, Politics and the Budget (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988), 249-50. More generally (and with some exaggeration), see David Stockman, The Triumph of Politics (New York: Harper and Row, 1986).

[31]William Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," Atlantic 248(December, 1981): 33; Howard Shuman,

tical challenge within the Cabinet (with the notable exception of the Secretary of Defense, who was confident of Reagan's commitment to building up America's military posture), and the "top-down" centralization of the administration also precluded reviews of OMB recommendations by the agencies themselves.[32] Administrators were kept as far away as possible from the budget process, the reverse of the Carter "bottom-up" approach to budget formulation, in order to prevent any further bureaucratic resistance.[33] The second key element to this plan, of course, was the reorganization plan described in section one.

Stockman worked so quickly, in fact, that Reagan was able to submit his budget revisions for FY 1982 a brief seven weeks after taking office.[34] The new administration's proposal called for a large tax cut and sizable, across the board spending cuts in every domestic spending area; the message also briefly outlined budget changes

---

Politics and the Budget (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988), 249; Glenn Pascall, The Trillion Dollar Budget (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 8.

[32]Allen Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America, eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984): 91. Joel Krieger, Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Decline (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 184-85.

[33]Campbell, Managing the Presidency, 1986, 183-84. Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," 96-97.

[34]Robert Hartman, "Congress and Budget-Making," Political Science Quarterly 97(Fall 1982), 389.

Reagan would seek over the next three years.[35] Gaining legislative approval of these proposals would be difficult, however, as Stockman and others quickly realized.[36] The "Reagan Revolution" itself had hardly won a ringing endorsement in the fall elections, and the new administration was quite aware of the potency of the political forces they planned to challenge. In a sense, the only way Reagan could win the budget "game" was to change the rules, and he did so by changing the nature of the budget reconciliation process created by the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974. To bypass Congress, Reagan called for the use of reconciliation procedures at the beginning, not the end, of the budget process, a legislative "preemptive strike." The move was not a mere technicality: In essence, the administration had captured the legislative agenda and excluded congressional bargaining in the budget process in a single step.[37]

By choosing to short circuit the congressional budget process, Reagan hoped to gain the same results he achieved by short circuiting his own Cabinet: passage of deep budget cuts with little or no political resistance and

---

[35]Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," 102-103. Reagan's First Year, 1982, 27.
[36]Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," 36-39.
[37]Allen Schick, Reconciliation and the Congressional Budget Process (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1981). See also Krieger, Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Decline, 1986, 182-83; Shuman, Politics and the Budget, 1988, 252; Reagan's First Year, 1982, 32.

with little examination by hostile agents of individual interests.[38] In the end, Reagan achieved his goal. The Senate passed the first Concurrent Resolution in April, and the House passed the "Gramm-Latta I" bill on May 7.[39] A compromise version of Gramm-Latta was passed later that month, after only two days of floor debate.[40] The bill passed so quickly, in fact, that no member knew exactly what had been cut under the new compromise.[41]

To guarantee the cuts would remain in place, the Reagan team shortly realized, a second round of budget cuts would be needed and the earlier cuts reaffirmed. Within two months, a second Gramm-Latta bill was proposed and debated. But Reagan's advisers were more reluctant to engage in this particular battle.[42] The administration, flush with its victory in the first round of budget cuts, had launched a second legislative initiative to reform the Social Security system. Reagan had readily endorsed the proposal, having spent years criticizing the government's program, but resistance came quickly and the Congress was in no mood to compromise after the early defeat. Reagan

---

[38]Jean Peters, "Reconciliation 1982: What Happened?" PS XIV (Fall 1981): 732-36. Bowles, The White House and Capital Hill, 1985, 231.

[39]Reagan's First Year, 1982, 33.

[40]Hartman, "Congress and Budget-Making," 389-90.

[41]Dale Tate, "Reconciliation Conferees Face Slim Choices," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 39 (July 4, 1981): 1167.

[42]Lou Cannon, Reagan (New York: Putnam and Sons, 1982) 334-35.

continued to insist on reform for Social Security even after his aides persuaded him that the bad feeling created in the first Gramm-Latta battle had robbed him of his earlier coalition, and that his efforts were better spent in securing those first budget cuts.[43]

"Son of Gramm-Latta," as the bill was tagged, was in trouble as well. Reagan found that after two short months his coalition had begun to collapse, with Democrats organizing themselves to resist the administration and supporters resenting the administration's "short circuit." As Salamon and Abramson explain,

> In short, faced with a significant opportunity to forge a moderate-conservative coalition in both the House and Senate behind a program of domestic spending constraint and military growth, Ronald Reagan had tended to stake out an extreme position, and hold out for the "whole loaf" when it has seemed clear to most that two-thirds of the loaf is all the political system will accommodate. Although a case can be made that this represents an effective bargaining strategy, the costs are considerable in terms of the staying power of the administration's policies and the consolidation of a workable coalition in Congress. By 1983, in fact, moderate Democrats in the House felt the president had cut the ground out from under them, and even Republican support for the administration had deteriorated considerably....[44]

---

[43]Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 154-59.
[44]Salamon and Abramson, "Governance," 60.

There is little doubt that the political gains made in 1982 came at a high political price. Reagan's early success came by holding together a remarkably cohesive coalition, but resentment over his politicization of the budget process forced the early collapse of that coalition.[45] By 1982, Reagan's advisers knew compromise with Congress would be necessary, even if Reagan himself refused to engage in such compromise. The members of the Reagan team found themselves in an awkward position: trying to convince their own president that the approach which led to such swift and far reaching victory in 1981 had now yielded stalemate and deadlock. Most of the members of Congress were angry that the White House had usurped a tool Congress had created to control presidential power to press the passage of the Reagan budget. House Ways and Means Chair Dan Rostenkowski seemed to summarize the mood of Congress best when he told his colleagues:

> As one who served in Congress through a succession of administrations, I find it genuinely alarming to see a pattern developing on major pieces of legislation in which the work product of the committee system can be cynically discarded in favor of substitute

---

[45]Allen Schick, "How the Budget Was Won and Lost," Presidents and Congress: Assessing Reagan's First Year, ed. Norman Ornstein (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1982), 15-19.

> legislation written in some downtown hideaway...[the result] leaves the institution [Congress] weaker, for it denies to Republicans and Democrats alike the opportunity to write and take responsibility for our work product.[46]

The effect of the earlier decisions was even more keenly felt in the effort to achieve the second, and perhaps more important, element for Reagan's budget strategy: tax reduction. While tax policy is often considered a separate subject from budgeting, the Reagan approach linked the two fiscal elements in a new way. As Aaron Wildavsky explains,

> President Reagan thought of budgets as political instruments. As he saw it, Democrats were using spending to create constituents...To prevent this, Reagan brought in his children's allowance theory, namely, the way to stop spending was not to issue endless admonitions but to cut down on the allowance. If you took the tax money away, Congress wouldn't have it to spend. Believing the budget was about political economy, not just economic economy, the president radically reversed the conventional wisdom, which held that spending had to be cut before taxes could be lowered.[47]

---

[46]Reagan's First Year, 1982, 35.

[47]Aaron Wildavsky, "If You Can't Budget, How Can You Govern?" Thinking About America: The United States in the 1990's, eds. Annelise Anderson and Dennis Bark (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1988), 269.

One might expect passage of a tax reduction to be a rather simple matter, as giving money is always more popular than taking money. True to the description given by Salamon and Abramson, however, the administration chose to "go for broke," in the words of one Treasury Department official.[48] Fresh on the heels of Gramm-Latta II, the administration secured the tax reduction package on July 29. But the victory was short lived, as the economy failed to respond in the manner predicted by the Reagan team. The "whole loaf," which Congress had again granted, began to appear to be a mistake. Republicans in the Senate, led by Pete Domenici as chair of the Budget Committee, proposed tax increases only two months after the tax package had passed, suggesting the coalition had further collapsed and the support from Senate Republicans was drifting away from the administration.[49]

By the start of 1982, a cadre of Reagan's strongest supporters, including Domenici, Bob Dole and Paul Laxalt, were warning Reagan that he could no longer count on the support of Senate Republicans and demanding Reagan accept a set of tax increases. Reagan angrily rejected their proposals, later arguing some in the Senate had "chickened a little" but admitting his own advisers were among those clucking the grim news.[50]

---

[48]Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 170.
[49]Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 184-85.
[50]Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 338-346.

Assessing the Reagan decision to centralize and shortcut budget procedures is difficult, since the victories of 1981 guarantee the long-term effects of this fiscal policy will remain a subject for debate among political scientists and economists for some time. However, few can deny the deficits generated by the Reagan budget contributed greatly to the fiscal crisis the country faces today.[51] The purpose of this chapter is not to debate the wisdom of Reagan's budget; instead, the focus should remain on the budget strategy Reagan selected.

The resistance to a second round of reconciliation, as well as the political fallout from a $200 billion deficit, forced Reagan to finally agree to meet with Congressional leaders, the so-called "Gang of 17," and to barter for budget cuts with some tax increases and a reduction in the amount of defense spending. To preserve the principles of his economic plan, Reagan had finally begun to realize he would have to compromise on the details of its implementation.[52] The mere fact that Reagan was willing to trade these important concessions for relatively meager budget cuts demonstrates just how

---

[51]Joseph Minarik and Rudolph Penner, "Fiscal Choices," Challenge to Leadership, ed. Isabel Sawhill (Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1988), 281.

[52]Minarik and Penner, "Fiscal Choices," 38-9; Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," 104-105; Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 362-63.

damaging the "short circuit" had been to congressional-executive relations.[53] It would be erroneous to conclude, however, that Reagan simply did not care enough about his economic program as he did not reject all attempts to compromise on the particulars. Ironically, those who argue Reagan was merely a "pragmatist" ignore the length of time and the even larger amount of pressure from within his own administration Reagan had endured to arrive at this moment. Arguing Reagan had "retreated" from his agenda would be similar to arguing the South had abandoned Vicksburg: the final result is captured, but the true nature of the siege is forgotten.

The new round of budget haggling, coupled with an economic recession, tarnished the image of the unbeatable Ronald Reagan and contributed to mid-term losses in the 1982 Congressional elections for the GOP.[54] Indeed, by 1983 Congressional resistance to Reagan's control over the

---

[53]This conclusion cannot ignore other factors contributing to Reagan's decision, however. Certainly the recession of 1982 helped to speed the demise of the Reagan coalition in Congress, as joblessness (as one indicator) reached a peak of 9% in May of that year. Such contributing factors do not mitigate the argument that Reagan had, in effect, "burned his bridges" with Congress, preventing the formulation of more short term and limited compromises on budget and tax policy. See the discussion in Jack Germond and Jules Witcover, Wake Us When Its Over (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985), 33-35 for a brief summary of these pressures.

[54]Jeff Fishel, Presidents and Promises (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1985), 151. Heclo and Penner, "Fiscal and Political Strategy in the Reagan Administration," 31-33.

budget process resulted in the pronouncement that the FY 1984 budget was "dead on arrival" in Congress, and the budget process remained out of the control of the White House for the remainder of Reagan's tenure.[55] In the end, Reagan's decision to centralize and control the budget process virtually destroyed that procedure, costing him the very success he sought in the future.[56]

C. Explaining the Reagan Decisions: "Classic" Studies

As noted in the introduction of this chapter, one could interpret Reagan's actions in reorganization and budget reform as "successes:" the administration was "politicized" in the manner Reagan desired and the budget process was manipulated to administration ends. This section will argue, however, that these actions were in fact destructive to what seemed to be Reagan's goals. To do this, an examination of the "rational decider" and "personality" models is necessary.

---

[55]John Crawford, "Budget Standoffs Characterize the Reagan Years," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 45 (October 24, 1987): 2572.

[56]Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," 113-14; Fishel, Presidents and Promises, 1985, 181.

1. The "Rational Decider:" Reagan as Calculator

Presidential Power was published before the Reagan presidency began, but Richard Neustadt did suggest in earlier editions that presidential staffs play an important role in the success of a president, as noted in Chapter Two. The most recent edition of Neustadt's work does little to expand upon or explain his advice on this matter. Earlier, Neustadt had argued executive officials, at the Cabinet and sub-Cabinet levels, must be persuaded into cooperation, since the "literary theory of the Constitution" does not reflect the realities of presidential power.[57] As noted in Chapter Two, however, this leads to some confusion about Neustadt's recommendation for presidential decisions on administrative policy: does a president select loyal staff members, thus guaranteeing the efficient exercise of executive power, or will one run a dangerous risk, like Nixon, of having loyal staff members take the president's wishes "too far?" As Chapter Two notes, Neustadt believes Nixon chose badly, but must reduce his argument to a condemnation of Nixon's personality to save his theory.

Neustadt's treatment of Reagan in the most recent edition of Presidential Power further illustrates the problem of the "managerial presidency," to again recall

---

[57]Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1980), 29-33.

Arnold's terminology. By filling presidential appointments with officials who are loyal to Reagan's principles, Neustadt might argue Reagan had found a new way to guarantee a successful presidency without the risk of Nixon's "insecure" personality. Indeed, the reputation and prestige enjoyed by a president among his hand-picked advisers would virtually guarantee the success Neustadt argues every president needs. Barbara Kellerman praises Reagan's actions in 1981 for exactly these reasons when she uses Neustadt's framework to examine the "political presidency." Kellerman argues Reagan followed Neustadt's recommendations to achieve early success, and was able to skillfully persuade others to accept the 1981 budget through good marketing and "consummate" political leadership.[58]

Neustadt's interpretation of Reagan's decisions on the budget describes a president who simultaneously displayed detachment and conviction. While Neustadt notes Reagan was "not dumb," he blames David Stockman for Reagan's strong commitment to the budget and tax policies.[59] His explanation for the depth of Reagan's convictions echoes the Barber analysis once again, however unwittingly. Just as Neustadt's accounting of Richard Nixon's behavior ultimately relies on an assessment of person-

---

[58]Barbara Kellerman, The Political Presidency (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 220-253.
[59]Richard Neustadt, Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents (New York: Free Press, 1990), 276-279.

ality, his explanation of Reagan's confidence is the president's reaction to his "audience," and a psychological need for their approval and applause.[60] In the end, Neustadt's analysis returns to a defense of a successful method which, unfortunately, has often been used by the wrong presidents.

The errors in Neustadt's analysis spring from his use of sources as well as his theory, particularly when describing Reagan's budget and tax policies. By relying on David Stockman's account, Neustadt may unwittingly adopt an erroneous view of Reagan's decisions. While a more lengthy description of Reagan's political beliefs follows, it is worth noting here that Neustadt seems to accept an image of the Reagan presidency which is coming under increasing reconsideration. Without access to the documents of the administration, analysis of the Reagan White House must necessarily rely on the later accounts of chief aides. But uncritical acceptance of the account of a young Budget Director with a very large axe to grind seems unwise, particularly when that account is peppered with sweeping conclusions based on rather shaky evidence.

For example, Stockman claims Reagan had little interest in economic theory or the realities of budget cutting, basing this conclusion on the absence of detailed instruction from Reagan and the president's failure on an

---

[60]Neustadt, Presidential Power and the Modern Presidency, 1990, 273-74.

"economics test" administered by Stockman. As noted both earlier and in the next section, however, Reagan rarely gave such detailed instruction, confident that his hand-picked loyalists could be relied upon to find the most palatable method for implementing the principles Reagan articulated. His strategy for "reorganization from within" made such instruction unnecessary, and Reagan never pretended to possess the technical knowledge necessary to get the legislative job done. While this may reflect a shortcoming on the part of Reagan, it can hardly be concluded that Reagan was uninterested in the economic policy of his administration.

The second charge raised by Stockman is more serious, since it does suggest ignorance. Again, while a full account of Reagan's beliefs must wait, it is worth noting that Stockman's test was hardly a worthy gauge of Reagan's knowledge. The correct answers on Stockman's test were written to conform to the outcomes Stockman considered necessary, while discretion could reasonably be expected to lead Reagan to different choices. In other words, the answers Reagan gave were "wrong" only so far as they deviated from the legislative plan Stockman had constructed. Thus, Reagan's failing grade may reflect a disagreement on the particulars of the legislative strategy, precisely the aspect of policy making Reagan chose to avoid by selecting

Stockman, as well as the failing Stockman attributed to Reagan in the first part of his charge.[61]

Neustadt goes even further in his new edition by arguing Reagan committed a second error. His analysis stems from a rather lengthy treatment of the Iran-Contra affair, and his conclusions are tainted by the lessons of that event. Neustadt argues Reagan's lack of "relevant experience" in foreign affairs and his inability to access those with such experience left him vulnerable to the activities of North and Poindexter.[62] Thus, a greater background in foreign policy would have saved Reagan from ignorance about the arms for hostage deal and the diversion of funds to the Contras.

Interestingly, the only independent account of the Reagan administration has emerged from the investigations and trials surrounding the Iran-Contra affair. Although it is beyond the scope of this project to assess the evidence presented in the public record, it is worth noting that more complete investigations are also revising the image of a "helpless" Reagan. Theodore Draper's compilation of the record has clearly demonstrated the quite active role played by Reagan in directing the overtures to the Iranian government. Confirming the earlier conclusion about Reagan's involvement in his administration, Draper does not conclude Reagan actually con-

---

[61]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 153.
[62]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 308-312.

cerned himself with the day-to-day operations of the National Security Staff. However, he does argue Reagan agreed with the foreign policy principles involved, spoke with authority and intelligence at planning meetings, and provided a good deal more instruction than the Tower Commission report had indicated.[63] Already, this early peek into the operations of the White House suggests many have been underestimating Reagan's involvement in his own administration. It is a safe leap to assume his involvement extended even more deeply into economic policy, a subject of equal or more importance during the early administration.

Reagan's surprisingly successful first year in office would seem to confirm Neustadt's initial expectations for a president who can persuade his own administration. His ability to shape the government to conform to his principles and to alter the government's thinking on budget matters seem to support this conclusion. With a "blitzkrieg" of legislation, government resources were shifted away from social spending and quickly moved to a large defense buildup, all with little or no internal opposition.[64] Reagan seems to have managed both changes with skill, just as Neustadt would predict. On balance, the Reagan decisions to "recapture" the executive branch

---

[63]Theodore Draper, A Very Thin Line (New York: Hill-Wang, 1991), esp. 596-98.

[64]Schick, Reconciliation and the Congressional Budget Process, 1981, 389-91.

through the politicization of the bureaucracy and the swift alteration of the budget process seemed to pay off in presidential success.

A closer examination of the Reagan record suggests the opposite result was achieved by the Reagan decisions, however. By concentrating solely on the substance of a budget which could be enacted with the swift and monolithic action of loyal aides, Reagan quickly discovered that by ignoring the political structure of budget politics he experienced disastrous congressional relations in his second year in office. The erosion of the coalition led to further troubles in the area of tax reduction, with Reagan stubbornly refusing to budge on tax relief until it was absolutely clear the entire economic passage was in jeopardy. Reagan's use of persuasion rested on his personal appeal, making coalition building a secondary concern rather than an important consideration; in other words, one element of Neustadt's notion of prestige had begun to undermine another, just as Nixon's administrative strategies had damaged his ability to persuade.[65] The reconciliation strategy allowed Reagan to make full and effective use of his powers of persuasion, but in the end that decision undermined his policy, and

---

[65]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 53; Salamon and Abramson, "Governance," 59-60.

political victory actually translated into a loss of power.[66]

The virtual collapse of the budget process in 1981 also opened new avenues of access to a series of interest group lobbyists, and government agencies began to utilize the media to compete for shrinking domestic resources; Reagan became increasingly unable to govern as the momentum for change shifted away from his administration.[67] In the end, Reagan found himself locked into a tense relationship with Congress, with virtually no procedure for breaking budget deadlocks.[68] A new, efficient budget process had not been created; instead, Reagan merely traded the political power of a landslide victory for an early series of successful votes. By cutting Congress out of the process, Reagan alienated that body and incurred its desire to reassert some measure of political control.[69] Politicizing the executive branch only widened that gulf.

If Reagan did seek to create a more easily persuaded executive branch, he was successful to the extent his

---

[66]John Hoadley, "Easy Riders: Gramm-Rudman-Hollings and the Legislative Fast Track," PS 19 (Winter, 1986): 30-36.
[67]Harold Wolman and Fred Teitelbaum, "Interest Groups and the Reagan Presidency," The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America, eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984), 306-308; Salamon and Abramson, "Governance," 60. Schick, "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy," 96-7.
[68]Salamon and Abramson, "Governance," 63-4.
[69]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 53.

administration presented a unified front to the political system on issues like budget reform; however, choosing to pursue reform by staffing the executive branch with administrators who were loyal to Reagan's principles eroded support in Congress and increased Congressional desires to reassert its will. Reagan's seemingly "irrational" technique for gaining power to persuade only led to further erosion of his power to govern. Neustadt's explanation cannot adequately account for Reagan's decision to govern through a loyal administration and to centralize the budget process.

2. "Personality:" The "Passive-Positive" Reagan?

Interestingly, James David Barber describes Reagan as a "passive-positive" president:[70] seeking approval, the passive-positive is characterized as having a low self-esteem and a superficial optimism. In addition, the passive-positive is agreeable and cooperative, although her or his hopes are particularly fragile.[71] While Barber's characterization does seem to capture some of Reagan's personality, it seems ironic that the administration most

---

[70]James David Barber, Presidential Character, 3rd. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985), 463.
[71]Barber, Presidential Character, 1985, 9-10.

often described in terms of confidence, if not arrogance, would also be described as approval-seeking. Indeed, the Reagan administration can hardly be described as "passive." While Reagan was not, like Lyndon Johnson, a cyclone of activity, he clearly asserted presidential authority to reduce resistance to his agenda.[72]

Rather than surrender power or play a passive role in governance, Reagan placed his greatest efforts at control in the beginning of the administrative process (selection of staff) rather than at the more traditional later stages (such as policy formation or implementation, areas more easily reached through reorganization). Although some accounts of the transition period at the start of the administration have suggested Reagan passively allowed his "troika" to choose the Cabinet, more recent accounts belie the story.[73]

These "Reaganites" created the illusion of a passive president (or, in more common parlance, a president "asleep at the wheel") by carrying out the Reagan agenda with less guidance than was previously necessary.[74] While Reagan certainly did not involve himself in the daily decisions of the administration, it would be a mistake to suggest he failed to direct the administration. Although

---

[72]Goldenberg, "The Permanent Government in an Era of Retrenchment and Redirection," 402-403. The Johnson characterization is Barber's at 8.

[73]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 73.

[74]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 19-20.

the public myth of the "passive Reagan" still endures, the reality was much more complicated, as Garry Wills explains:

> ..it is hard to find a parallel for Reagan's function, in government, business, or any other organization.....he is the indispensable center, as well as the symbol, of his highly personalized government..Reagan...not only sells the product, he <u>is</u> the product.[75]

Reagan played a unique central role in his administration, and misinterpretations of that role have led some to decry and others to forgive Reagan's mistakes. But as many of the more recent materials cited in this chapter suggest (including Draper, Cannon and Barrett), Reagan was much more active and central to his administration than earlier "kiss and tell" books had indicated. This does not suggest Reagan governed well or in the same manner as Johnson or even Carter; it does suggest Reagan can hardly be classified as a "passive" president.[76]

A better characterization of Reagan's approach would describe a president who is long on principle but short on

---

[75]Garry Wills, <u>Reagan's America</u> (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1987), 321.

[76]Barrett even reports Reagan was quite angry with Barber's characterization of himself as a "passive" president. A revealing exchange is found in Barrett, <u>Gambling With History</u>, 1983, 22-24.

knowledge about the process and details of governance.[77] As Reagan himself noted in his autobiography,

> I don't believe a chief executive should supervise every detail of what goes on in his organization. The chief executive should set broad policy and general ground rules, tell people what he or she wants them to do, then let them do it; he should make himself (or herself) available, so that the members of his team can come to him if there is a problem. If there is, you can work on it together and, if necessary, fine-tune the policies. But I don't think a chief executive should peer constantly over the shoulders of the people who are in charge of a project and tell them every few minutes what to do.[78]

Measuring passivity in traditional ways, by counting telephone calls to members of Congress or giving detailed instructions on legislative strategy, fails to capture this side of presidential activity. By relying on this conception of the presidency, many were puzzled by Reagan: he seemed to be both the center of a revolution and asleep at the wheel. Thus, Reagan was occasionally compared to both Franklin Roosevelt and Warren G. Harding in the press, since both characterizations capture aspects of Reagan's administration. Where one looks for presidential

---

[77]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 47, 55.
[78]Ronald Reagan, An American Life (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 161.

activity often shapes the perception of "active" and "passive" characters.

Other interpretations suggest even this activity was manufactured, however. Reagan is described as an actor who never leaves the set of his presidency, a politician who merely reads the lines clever handlers provide. As noted earlier, this is reflected in Neustadt's account of Reagan as well. While Reagan frequently relied on the skills of his speechwriters, Lou Cannon recently argued this reliance can be misinterpreted:

> Though most of his speeches were written by others, many of them still reflected the uncluttered values he had expressed on the banquet circuit for a quarter century. He thought of himself as a man of principle, and he was difficult to push on the issues that mattered most to him. As president, he was at once the most malleable and least movable of men.[79]

The budget record of 1981 also seems to refute this characterization. Reagan's greatest and earliest effort was to control the budget process, not passively surrender it to Congress. The effort to control came so quickly, David Stockman recalled, "We didn't have time to add up all the numbers."[80] Reagan's willingness to allow Stockman a free hand in devising the budget cuts could be

---

[79]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 35.
[80]Greider, "The Education of David Stockman," 54.

interpreted as inactivity or shrewd politics. On the other hand, Reagan was often praised for his willingness to gamble on budget cuts and his skill in handling the politics of his dealings with Congress during his first year.[81] In either case, "passive" can hardly describe the Reagan budget decisions.

Neither "classic" model of presidential behavior can fully explain the administrative choices Reagan made during his presidency. Both models fail to demonstrate why Reagan would pursue reorganization and budget strategies which would ultimately undermine the goals he seemed to seek as president. To understand those decisions, one must gain a greater appreciation of Reagan's belief system.

D. Explaining the Reagan Decisions: "Belief Systems"

This section offers a more complete understanding of Reagan's selection of his administrative strategies by examining the role his political beliefs played in decision making. Reagan has often been described as one of America's most "ideological" presidents, the opposite of the assessment usually given of Carter and, to a lesser

---

[81]Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 368.

degree, Nixon.[82] Arguments about Reagan's loyalty to conservative principles abound, however, and a remarkable consistency emerges as one compares his beliefs to those of Nixon and Carter. Like his predecessors, Reagan was frequently charged with inconsistency and political expediency as critics evaluated his departures from true conservatism. Others finally conclude he was "pragmatic," usually quoting Reagan's complaint that conservatives outside the administration seem to want to go "off the cliff with all flags flying."[83] Such debates fall into the "bias trap," however, by mistakenly concluding that such inconsistencies mean political beliefs do not exist (and by erroneously using the term "pragmatism" to characterize an absence of political belief). Understanding Reagan's political beliefs requires the observer abandon the category of "conservatism" and examine the central principles of Reagan's belief system.

Reagan's early speeches and political activities reflect a remarkably consistent set of central political beliefs, albeit less clearly articulated than those of Nixon and Carter in their early years. Two themes are

---

[82]Because of this description, one has a difficult time writing about Reagan's political beliefs without slipping into the language of "ideology." Thus, terms like "ideological" are rendered in the text with quotation marks, to remind the reader that the term is often being used by others to describe what Chapter One defines as "belief."

[83]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 114, 185-86.

given expression: a fundamental hostility for government activity, and the importance of government for promoting and encouraging proper social and moral values. Reagan's dislike of government finds its earliest expression in his opposition to fascism and communism as "collectivist" philosophies. Reagan argued that such philosophies were inherently undemocratic and undermined principles of freedom.[84] Such collectivism, he claimed, guaranteed the failure of such systems in the future. Early Reagan speeches, particularly as spokesperson for General Electric, also argued individuals should act without government help, since such help always led to inefficiency and bad policy.[85]

Reagan's objection to collectivist states did not rest on abstract discussions of political philosophy, however. The key to understanding Reagan's anti-communism was his belief that such systems undermined basic social and moral values. Those values are reflected in the common sense of purpose found in families and communities, according to Reagan:

> You get to know people as individuals, not as blocs or members of special interest groups. You discover that, despite their differences, most people have a lot in common: Every individual is unique, but we all want free-

---

[84]Paul Erickson, Reagan Speaks (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 18-21.
[85]Reagan, An American Life, 1990, 127-28.

> dom and liberty, peace, love and security, a good home, and a chance to worship God in our own way; we all want the chance to get ahead and make our children's lives better than our own.

Reagan's confidence in these principles as the central ideas holding together American society also accounts for the sense of American exceptionalism which characterizes his rhetoric.[86] Such confidence also accounts for the roots of the Reagan social and moral agenda. As Reagan remarked to the National Association of Evangelicals in 1983:

> I want you to know that this administration is motivated by a political philosophy that sees the greatness of America in you, her people, and in your families, churches, neighborhoods, communities - the institutions that foster and nourish values like concern for others and respect for the rule of law under God.[87]

Indeed, it is this character and not mere military might, according to Reagan, which accounts for the success of American foreign policy as it attempts to resist communist expansion.[88]

---

[86]For a fuller discussion, see Erickson, Reagan Speaks, 1985, 2-4.
[87]Quoted in Erickson, Reagan Speaks, 1985, 157.
[88]Reagan, An American Life, 1990, 348, 484-85.

These two central beliefs, linked together, also account for Reagan's early flirtation with the New Deal and his admiration for Franklin Roosevelt. Reagan admired the activism of the New Deal in certain realms of society, particularly those which encouraged communities and families to prosper.[89] Reagan takes great pride in his autobiography in comparing his belief in the proper role of government with that of Roosevelt, illustrating his point with a quote from the architect of the New Deal that claimed "Continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber."[90] In Reagan's belief system, the New Deal and the Reagan Revolution share the same basic aims: government promotion of social and moral values and, at the same time, the limitation of government activity.

Thus, like Nixon and Carter, Reagan argues the simplification of government should be the central idea of an administration. Simplification takes on a different meaning for Reagan, however, than it had for these earlier presidents. Nixon's belief in simplification meant the return of federal programs to individuals, as well as state and local governments, where political power would rest with those who knew their own problems best. Carter, on the other hand, wished to provide democratic control

---

[89]Wills, Reagan's America, 1987, 72.
[90]Reagan, An American Life, 1990, 134.

over the federal government, making process the vehicle for the exercise of political power. Unlike these presidents, and indeed any other modern president, Reagan sought to eliminate government activity. While in sympathy with Nixon's confidence in the individual, Reagan disdained the idea of revenue sharing or block grants; he simply did not believe any government should be involved in the lives of its people at certain times.[91] In some ways, Reagan and Carter agree that government has somehow failed the American people, and that some change is crucial to returning the nation's well being. However, Carter clearly believes improved communication is critical to achieving broader democratic goals, while Reagan believes government must be simplified to enable it to carry out other elements of the Reagan agenda. To miss the second element of Reagan's agenda, the transformation of social life through carefully selected intervention, is to miss the evangelical side of Reagan. As Reagan himself explained to one interviewer during his first year in office,

> Listen, after you left.....I got to wondering about some things..What I should have said to you yesterday was

---

[91]Weatherford and McDonnell, "Ideology and Economic Policy," 130. Barrett notes some efforts at a Reagan-style New Federalism program (although Reagan was loathe to call it that) in 1981, but it received very little support from the president. See Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 342-44.

> that while I feel as I do about the proper relationship of federal and state government, I feel that those things that are the federal government's responsibility, we damn well do them [sic].92

This interpretation of Reagan's words also accounts for the centrality of this belief (Reagan spoke of this theme in the closing moments of his tenure, standing in an empty Oval Office on the day of the Bush Inauguration) even as he presided over the continued expansion of the federal bureaucracy.93 For Reagan, the problem with government sprang from its misguided choices of activism, not efficiency or democratic theory. In Reagan's own words, "..as you look back on that myriad of new federal programs, it's hard to find any that did much good for the poor or the nation as a whole."94

Thus, Reagan's anti-government theme encompassed more than a simple count of government employees: government was the problem because of the role it was playing in the lives of Americans, and Reagan wanted to change that role. In other words, Nixon changed government by vastly constricting its scope, creating greater individual freedom at the local level of government and for the individual; Carter changed government by opening communication from

---

92Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 23.
93Weatherford and McDonnell, "Ideology and Economic Policy," 20-21.
94Reagan, An American Life, 1990, 198.

the "bottom-up" to make government activity more democratically responsive; Reagan changed government by changing its agenda, and by altering it to become a more effective tool for reaching these new ends.[95]

Indeed, as noted above, Reagan is hardly an advocate of laissez-faire conservatism: like Theodore Lowi's characterization in The End of Liberalism, Reagan does not debate the existence of an activist state, he merely wishes to direct that activity in the arenas of "good" and "evil," or over issues of morality rather than social service.[96] This requires action, not inaction, and government is the tool which must be honed and used to these ends. Garry Wills captured the evangelical nature of Reagan's belief system when he drew this interesting comparison in 1987:

> Jesse Jackson, in fact, more than any other politician now on the scene, resembles Reagan...Both men are believers in the cause they embody, so that self-promotion and ideological commitment are fused. Both think, always, of a way to turn each situation, each event, into a vehicle for increasing the acceptance of their message. Both make claims that are one-sided, partial, over-simple, but deeply felt and almost hypnotically convincing to any listeners not actively determined to resist them.. ..They both need to believe they are

---

[95]Ceaser, "The Theory of Governance of the Reagan Administration," 79-80.

[96]Salamon and Lund, "Governance," 6-7.

> selling something far larger than themselves, but that the only way to do that is <u>through</u> themselves. They carry the message...Neither is the manager. They look to others for administrative direction.[97]

Thus, any element of executive power must be used to achieve that agenda, and the power of reorganization to make government act in unison and the power of the budget to define and set national priorities make these strategies primary instruments for the expression of political beliefs. Government truly <u>is</u> the problem for Reagan, but that statement does not reflect a desire to eliminate government. Instead, government must be properly shaped to make the Reagan social and moral agenda the policy for the nation.[98]

Reagan's determination to achieve these goals is the undertold story of the Reagan White House. While others have noted his determined adherence to his political beliefs, that adherence has been misinterpreted as "unquenchable optimism." Confidence in a belief and optimism are easily confused, as the former often includes the latter, and separating the two can be difficult.[99]

---

[97]Wills, <u>Reagan's America</u>, 1987, 323.

[98]Newland, "A Mid-Term Appraisal," 45.

[99]This, I would argue, is the mistake Lou Cannon makes in his account of Reagan. Cannon himself argues Reagan was smarter than many give him credit, and that he had a firm grasp on the principles of his administration. To dismiss Reagan's confidence in his political beliefs as mere optimism seems to sell Reagan short. If Reagan was simply

Reagan's confidence in his political beliefs often lay below the surface of his otherwise agreeable persona, emerging at unexpected times.

This point is critical for understanding much of Reagan's decision making, since misinterpreting the role of belief in Reagan's decisions has led to contradictory conclusions in many accounts of his presidency. For example, Reagan's stubborn refusal to raise taxes even as his closest economic advisers argued doing so was necessary to close the deficit can be given two interpretations. One argues Reagan was foolishly blind to the consequences of his decision, optimistically ignoring the advice being given by his aides. This explanation does not account for Reagan's willingness to seek out and accept advice from the same advisers in other situations. Either Reagan haphazardly accepted and rejected advice from the same group of trusted people, or he had his own reasons for maintaining his opinion on this matter. If one argues Reagan lacked political beliefs and simply did the politically "rational" (Neustadt) or the "agreeable" (Barber), one cannot explain his decision to reject this advice.[100]

---

optimistic, he could be blind to principle, a point Cannon goes to great lengths to disprove. In the end, I would argue believing one is right in one's beliefs may seem like optimism to those who do not share those beliefs. See Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 25, 179.

[100]Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 134, 220. The fact that Cannon describes this determination as "optimism,"

Others misinterpret Reagan's apparent lack of interest in the conservative social agenda, or his willingness to trade support for his economic agenda by compromising on certain elements of his social agenda, as an absence of political belief. But Reagan made the economic program his first priority, consciously excluding social issues, in the belief that those changes would follow from and not come prior to his budget reforms. To do otherwise, in Reagan's mind, would be to "put the cart before the horse." In fact, it was the lesson of the Carter presidency which led Reagan to this conclusion: too much, too soon and with little attention paid to prioritizing meant failure and frustration.[101]

Given this system of political beliefs, it is clear why Reagan would maintain that centralizing the decision making process in the White House and short circuiting the normal budget process were crucial and why Neustadt's explanation for Reagan's choices is inadequate. Reagan's chief concern was control over the administration and

---

"stubbornness" and "confidence" all in the same biography suggests he has failed to distinguish between the implications of each term.

[101]Stockman is again the source of this interpretation of Reagan's social agenda. Because Reagan did not broadly "shake up" government in his first two years, Stockman concludes Reagan is merely a "consensus politician" who lacks a strong ideology. But Stockman's criticism is aimed at Reagan's decision not to disassemble the Social Security program, a battle he would have certainly lost and one which would have eroded congressional support for the economic program he wished to advance. Cannon, President Reagan, 1991, 109, 111.

passage of the budget. Both were political instruments for change in and of themselves, not disagreements over priorities.[102] For Reagan, budget change was fundamental, and he found it difficult to abandon his course even when it resulted in deadlock.[103] With only success on the agenda important to his political beliefs in mind, Reagan could be happy with early victories in Congress even as he guaranteed future defeats.[104] By pursuing the goal of budget centralization, Reagan undermined his control over the very tool he was trying to strengthen. His political beliefs left him little choice. By considering the influence of political beliefs on the goals of his decisions, Neustadt would be better able to account for Reagan's seemingly self-destructive behavior.

Similarly, Barber's account of Reagan's behavior would be enhanced by a consideration of the effect of these political beliefs. Reagan can hardly be seen as a "passive" president, and his unwillingness to compromise, like that of Jimmy Carter, certainly casts some doubt on the wisdom of classifying Reagan as an "active-positive." In a sense, Barber's analysis leaves us no closer to understanding Reagan than before.

---

[102]Schick, "How the Budget Was Won and Lost," 42-3.
[103]Robert Dallek, Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 71; Barrett, Gambling With History, 1983, 338-9.
[104]"Reading Reagan," Economist, 286 (26March-1April, 1983): 21.

For Reagan, as for Nixon and Carter, political beliefs shaped his decision making in ways underappreciated by traditional political science accounts. In the final analysis, all three "pragmatists" appear to make decisions guided more by their belief systems than is suspected by either "classic" study of the presidency.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, WITH REFLECTIONS ON THE BUSH PRESIDENCY

By examining the role of political beliefs in the decision making process, the preceding chapters have illustrated the often unappreciated role ideas play in shaping action. As Chapter One noted, this study sought a more complete understanding of decision making as an important presidential activity. It is perhaps wise to begin by concluding that a more complete explanation has been found by examining belief systems, but by no means is the "belief" model an explanation for all presidential behavior. The model seeks to supplement, not replace, current understandings of presidential behavior by addressing decisions which cannot be adequately explained by dominant theories in contemporary American political science.

This is clear when one reconsiders the "classic" models in light of the preceding analysis. The "rational decider" model, argued Chapter One, fails to account for

apparently irrational behavior by presidents. The source of this shortcoming lay in the methodology of the approach: the model presupposed the existence of certain goals by assuming that the goals which the president achieved or aimed for but failed to achieve at the conclusion of policy action were the original goals of the decider. By making this assumption, the "rational decider" model created a series of self-fulfilling prophecies, assuming the goals existed and then demonstrating their existence by working backwards from the conclusion to the inception of action. Doing so locked Neustadt's analysis into a conceptual difficulty when he attempted to articulate the proper activity for a president who seeks to persuade his own executive branch to a given policy. As the analysis in Chapters Two, Three and Four demonstrated, the only solution Neustadt could utilize to save himself from this difficulty was to blame the personalities of the presidents involved for their failure to correctly utilize his advice.

A greater appreciation of political beliefs acts as a valuable guide out of that conceptual difficulty, however. As the presidential chapters indicated, decisions made by the presidents in the areas of reorganization and budgeting often pursued goals which sprang from political beliefs which were unaccounted for by the "rational decider" model precisely because they appeared to be "irrational" by the definition of that model. By reexamining

beliefs, one discovers a way to escape the "bias trap" imposed by the assumptions built into the Neustadt thesis.

Similarly, the "personality" model was found to be deficient in its explanations of presidential behavior. Recall the objection raised in Chapter One centered on the "personality" model's susceptibility to the same "bias trap", selecting only certain aspects of personality to consider and missing the interaction of beliefs with the environment of the decider. For that reason, the presidential chapters demonstrated, Barber's analysis consistently failed adequately to account for presidential decision making, even as one attempted to correct his analysis on its own terms.

The "belief" model could better account for these decisions, however, by reexamining this relationship and providing a clear understanding of the role of beliefs in decision making. By reconsidering the importance of beliefs, a realm of decision making left underdeveloped by Barber's work is demonstrated to direct decision making in ways his analysis cannot appreciate.

One important caveat to the conclusions drawn from the preceding analysis is the important reminder that while understanding political beliefs is important, it is not the sole factor in presidential decision making. No claim has been made that analyses of political beliefs explain all presidential action. Instead, as the preceding summary indicates, the best one can venture is the

statement that belief systems influence decisions, often in important ways, and that such influence can be used to explain some decisions which would otherwise be unexplainable, or at least imperfectly explained. To claim more from the analysis of this study would be hubris; to claim less, however, would be to ignore the often dramatic effect beliefs can have on decisions.

A second, equally important caveat, would point out the limits of the case studies presented in this study. Each sought to better explain a set of decisions inadequately explained by other models. None of the chapters sought to engage in a revisionist reexamination of the three presidents they considered. For example, nothing in Chapter Two suggests Richard Nixon did not have an unusual, even paranoid, personality. Instead, the chapter argued that this understanding alone could not explain certain decisions made by Nixon on reorganization and budgeting. Similarly, Chapter Three did not seek to prove Carter was a completely competent president, despite analyses to the contrary. Chapter Three sought instead to prove Carter's beliefs account for many of the "irrational" decisions he seemed to make. Finally, the intention in Chapter Four was not to prove that Reagan was a president firmly in charge of all aspects of his administration. Rather, the reexamination attempted to show that Reagan's beliefs had a greater amount of influence over decision making than many scholars allow.

With those caveats in mind, one is left to ponder the usefulness of the "belief" model for explaining presidential behavior. It is perhaps valuable to apply the model to a final example in hopes of shedding some light on what appears to be an unexplainable decision making system.

While it is still too early to form firm conclusions about the Bush administration, particularly when considering the areas of reorganization and budget policy, some preliminary conclusions may be ventured which illustrate not only the continuing need to appreciate the importance of political beliefs but also the need to reconsider political science's standards for judging presidential behavior. Information on Bush is still largely limited to that which is reported in the popular press, with the exclusion of Bob Woodward's book on the war with Iraq.[1] Judgements on the basis of this data must be tentatively stated, but a picture of Bush decision making has begun to emerge in a piecemeal fashion. This section does not seek to continue the more formal analysis of the previous chapters, but offers some observations which suggest beliefs are important for explaining Bush's behavior as well.

---

[1]But this book deals only tangentially with Bush as a decision maker, in some respects. In fact, one of the shortcomings of Woodward's analysis is the comparatively small amount of information on the president. Bob Woodward, The Commanders (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

The Bush administration began under rather unusual circumstances. Bush is the first president since 1928 to succeed a member of his own party, and the first sitting Vice President since 1836 to be elected to office.[2] More than mere matters of historical curiosity, these facts have done much to shape the organization of the new Bush administration. The differences between the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George Bush are dramatic, and yet the public perception of Bush, shaped largely by his portrayal in the media, are based on a standard drawn from Ronald Reagan's administration (and, ultimately, Franklin Roosevelt's). But the peculiar circumstances of the Bush transition make such comparisons suspect and, as Chapter Four suggests, even misleading if one utilizes an understanding of presidential behavior which neglects the role of political beliefs in decision making.

The most peculiar circumstance of Bush's administration may be the continuation of the Reagan administrative and budgetary agendas, aspects frequently ignored by the media.[3] The general perception of the public primarily focuses on the apparent "drift" of the administration. Bush is frequently criticized for lacking a domestic agenda, for presiding over an administration with few new

---

[2]James Pfiffner, "Establishing the Bush Presidency," Public Administration Review 50 (January/February 1990): 64.

[3]Haynes Johnson, Sleepwalking Through History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), 439.

ideas, and (by the right) for surrounding himself with less conservative, less committed advisers.[4] Bush thus appears to drift from one domestic crisis to another, reacting rather than acting, and concentrating on foreign policy to the exclusion of domestic concerns.[5]

But these images may have been a consequence of the more active Reagan first years. As Fred Barnes pointed out early in the administration, "The problem with being a caretaker president is that the press wants more from the president than that, an expectation that makes Bush look weaker than he is."[6] As Bush functions as the "status quo" president, his reputation and administration remain hostage to the status quo created by Reagan.[7] Bush himself professes to be comfortable with the Reagan agenda, particularly where budgetary matters are concerned.[8] When asked how President Bush would differ from President Reagan, Bush rather lamely replied in his campaign autobiography by pointing out the fundamental agreement he had with Reagan. Only after making this point did Bush venture a few extensions of Reagan policies but no breaks

---

[4]Kenneth Walsh, "Bush's First Quarter," U.S. News and World Report 106 (May 1, 1989): 24-27.
[5]Pfiffner, "Establishing the Bush Presidency," 66.
[6]Fred Barnes, "Four Bore Years," New Republic 200 (March 27, 1989): 14.
[7]William Schneider, "The In-Box President," Atlantic 265 (January 1990): 37.
[8]George Bush and Victor Gold, Looking Forward (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 8-9, 80-81, 90, 202.

with his predecessor.[9] The few actual breaks with the Reagan administration have been largely symbolic: Bush's family is more visible (with a stronger positive reaction from the public), his work schedule more crowded, his administration more open and, despite John Sununu, apparently more ethical.[10] As one senior official in the Bush administration succinctly put it, "We inherited a situation that was basically A-OK. People were happy with the status quo. No domestic revolution was about to take place. With a few changes here and there, the G.O.P. could rule forever."[11]

The Bush transition seemed to reflect these circumstances. The transition team was exceptionally small, particularly when compared to the organization assembled by Pendleton James for the Reagan administration. Limited in activity, the team ignored the type of planning James had conducted. "Ideological" tests were abandoned, as were the various uses of Civil Service law to "blanket in" new appointees and punish malcontents. Instead, appointees were selected with personal loyalty to Bush as the primary qualification, coupled with an equal concern for "competency." As a result, Bush was more likely to hire career public servants by selecting his immediate

---

[9]Bush and Gold, Looking Forward, 1988, xii-xviii.
[10]Pfiffner, "Establishing the Bush Presidency," 14; Johnson, Sleepwalking Through History, 1991, 442-43.
[11]Michael Duffy, "A Case of Doing Nothing," Time 137 (January 7, 1991): 28.

Cabinet only and allowing each member to organize her or his department. Although Bush still reserved final approval of all appointments for himself, the change significantly departed from the Reagan approach.[12]

One might assume Bush departed from the Reagan method of "reorganization from within" because that reorganization had already taken place, and Bush could be complacent to simply carry over the Reagan appointees into the new administration. Surveys of the appointees find this was not the case, however. Only approximately one-third of the Bush appointees, at the end of his first year in office, had seen service in the Reagan administration.[13] As far as administrative personnel were concerned, the new administration was indeed mostly new.

Thus, the Bush administration would seem to be characterized by the basic agenda and functions of the Reagan administration, but without the "ideological" underpinnings of the Reagan selection system. The Bush team is perceived as less "ideological," less conservative, more cooperative and malleable. The driven Reagan years seem to have been replaced by the rudderless Bush years.[14]

---

[12]Pfiffner, "Establishing the Bush Presidency," 67-69.
[13]Judith Haremann, "Reagan Regime Lives On Through Appointee's Alumni Groups," Washington Post (August 25, 1989): A19.
[14]Pfiffner, "Establishing the Bush Presidency," 70-71.

This understanding of Bush, however, is also in some measure a product of the popular perception of the new administration through the prism of the Reagan years. Like Bush, Reagan presided over a Cabinet which was a mixture of "conservative" and "pragmatic" appointees. As the previous chapter suggests, these distinctions are rather meaningless for explaining the dynamic of the Reagan White House, and they seem even less appropriate for understanding Bush. All of the current president's closest assistants held positions of authority in the Reagan administration; in that sense, Bush can hardly be said to be playing the game with a "new team."[15] Indeed, the Bush "conservatives" - Sununu, Thornburgh, Boyden Gray, James Pinkerton, to name a few - are unusual in their ready access to Bush, reflecting their close ties to the president and their shared interest in domestic policy.[16] Bush is hardly a "pragmatist" surrounded by "pragmatists," as he is frequently described, as distinguished from the Reagan presidency. Instead, Bush seems

---

[15]"Ready to Go," National Review XLI (January 27, 1989): 15. Haremann, "Reagan Regime Lives on Through Appointees Alumni Groups."

[16]For details and examples, see Donald Baer, "A White House of Many Mansions," U.S. News and World Report 106 (January 23, 1989): 16-17. Kenneth Walsh, "George Bush's Idea-Free Zone," U.S. News and World Report 110 (January 14, 1991): 34-35. Jason DeParle, "Point Man in Battle for GOP's Soul Doesn't Worry About Drawing Fire," New York Times (December 18, 1990): B12. Anne Riley Dowd, "How Bush Manages the Presidency," Fortune 122 (August 27, 1990): 70-71.

to have a similar mix of political advice near to him in the Oval Office.

The Bush administration appears to operate with fewer beliefs to guide decision making. But Bush's political beliefs can be used to illuminate his decision making, and a better understanding of Bush reveals a degree of consistency in his decisions which may escape the casual observer. Perhaps nowhere was this perception and misperception more evident than in the apparent "flip-flop" Bush did on the issue of raising taxes during the budget negotiations of 1990. Bush seemed to change his mind several times during the negotiations and did not seem to have a sense of what goals his budget proposals hoped to achieve. Without those clear goals, painted in the strong terms the "Reagan Revolution" used to press the first budget cuts, the Bush administration seems to drift.[17] Bush seems to violate Neustadt's advice that a president persuade others to a clearly defined set of goals. Instead, Bush seems to have no domestic agenda goals.

But Bush does seem in agreement with Reagan's agenda, as noted earlier. While this has led some to engage in a rather fruitless debate over the depth of Bush's conservatism,[18] it is important to note Bush himself is

---

[17]For the strongest case for this view, see Schnieder, "The In-Box President," 37.

[18]Ronald Elving, "House Service Set Course for New President," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 47 (January 14, 1989): 55-57.

comfortable with supporting and continuing what Reagan had started.[19] To understand the differences between the Reagan and Bush presidencies, and to understand the reasons Bush altered the practices of the Reagan administration in the areas of reorganization and budgeting, it is necessary to look beyond the record of the administration to the decision maker himself.

A closer examination of Bush's political beliefs begins to shed some light on the Bush decisions and helps to explain why Bush altered the Reagan selection process. Recall that Reagan believed the best and only way to make government work was to staff his administration with appointees who were loyal to his principles and to press an economic program in Congress no matter what the cost. Bush, on the other hand, seems to believe the best and only way to preserve the Reagan agenda is to create a politics of inclusion, where potential challengers are drawn into the agenda already in place. Bush seems to prize the process of connecting individuals and ideas, rather than the achievement of policy ends, as the primary goal of leadership and the chief motivation for his decisions as president.

Defining this idea in precise terms is difficult, since Bush himself has failed to articulate it in a single place and few have reflected on this aspect of the Bush

---

19"I've Been Underestimated," Time 132 (August 22, 1988): 20-21.

presidency. As the previous section concluded, most evaluations of Bush follow the model of policy-orientation, as do the interpretive models of Neustadt and Barber: presidents are policy goal oriented, and a successful or "good" president is one who articulates and achieves those goals. But Bush seems to depart from this model, in that his speeches and autobiography are permeated with references to "listening" and "including." For example, a good leader, according to Bush, is a person who bargains well, listens to opponents, includes those who are normally excluded.[20] This extends to creation of a process which provides this leadership, where policy goals are less important than an open process which is inclusive.[21]

While this interpretation seems to be at odds with political beliefs, it is in fact a belief in itself, although its goals go undefined and are left to this process to determine. In this sense, interestingly, George Bush seems to resemble Jimmy Carter more than he does Ronald Reagan: both Carter and Bush were criticized for being "goalless" presidents, for being "pragmatists" without political beliefs. Unlike Carter, however, Bush

---

[20]Examples of these positions are scattered throughout Bush and Gold, Looking Forward, 1988, 91-92, 94, 165, 228-29, 251-52 with reference to both Reagan and himself (in various positions).

[21]Kerry Mullins and Aaron Wildavsky, "The Procedural Presidency of George Bush," Society 28 (January/February 1991): 51-52.

displays little or no concern for democratizing this process. Instead, Bush creates an interesting amalgamation of Carter's confidence in process with Nixon's concern for community and state decision making. For Bush, being a conservative means the creation of connections within families, between families in a community, between communities within nations and, arguably, between communities of nations. This theme has been a consistent belief in Bush's major speeches, from his first days in Congress to his current administration.[22]

This process is assured by appointing individuals who can be trusted to remain loyal to the process. In this, the reasons for the alteration of the Reagan selection process can be better understood. While the dominant question asked about Reagan appointees was "Is she/he with us?", the important query for Bush nominees was "Is she/he a team player?"[23] The difference is subtle but important: the first question asks for loyalty to a principle or policy, while the second asks for loyalty to a process or person. It is this confidence in the people around him which makes Bush happiest, as none seek to pull the

---

[22]Elving, "House Service Set Course for New President," 55. Peggy Noonan, What I Saw at the Revolution (New York: Ivy Books, 1990), 322-23.

[23]Dowd, "How George Bush Manages the Presidency," 70-71.

process in a single direction, apart from the president's wishes.[24]

A president whose focus is on process rather than policy is something new to modern presidential administration, and may suggest these presidents seek to avoid the problems of the managerial presidency noted by Arnold. Such a president would avoid directing policy but strive to guarantee a process. By doing so, the problem of "managerialism" is changed. Rather than marshal a vast force to achieve policy ends, or seek drastic measures to end the "government of strangers," presidents accept the more limited goal of guaranteeing avenues of interest articulation and methods for creating compromise. As a result, even such presidents will be uncertain as to where that process will end, even though they remain an active and influential element in those negotiations. But the perception of the public, as Wildavsky and Mullins point out, is apparent policy "drift," as

> ..the political system and the processes it requires to make the individual parts mesh with the social whole thus become crucial reference points...This concentration on form as substance is Bush's hallmark, and it explains the purpose in his seeming lack of purpose.[25]

---

[24]Woodward's account of Bush is revealing in the loyalty and attention Bush feels for those around him. See Woodward, The Commanders, 1991, 47, 57, 245.

[25]Mullins and Wildavsky, "The Procedural Presidency of George Bush," 50.

Again, it is interesting to note that the same paragraph could have been written about Jimmy Carter, despite the very different definition of "mesh" the "bottom-up" strategy implied. The "drift" of the PRP also seems to be a function of Carter's acceptance and belief in a "form as substance." If Bush does prize this process, in any event, it is clear why he might choose to "flip-flop" on budget issues while striving to preserve a process which would protect an agenda already in place.[26] Such a belief would also explain why the "rational decider" and "personality" models would have a difficult time explaining Bush's decisions, since both models base their evaluations on policy goal achievement. A reconsideration of Bush's belief system can provide a more complete understanding of Bush decision making.

Parenthetically, such an explanation also helps to account for the nature of the criticisms of Bush raised by conservatives. Many believe Bush has abandoned the Reagan path, but hold this belief because Bush has been less confrontational, less willing to press the conservative agenda.[27] In a sharply critical essay, the National Review editorial board revealingly concluded by writing "At the midpoint of the presidential cycle, conservatives

---

[26]Charles Krauthammer, "The Great Cooperator," Washington Post (October 19, 1990): A23.

[27]Gwen Ifill, "Restless Conservatives Debate Future," Washington Post (December 24, 1990): A3.

assessing George Bush's domestic record find themselves about where they should have expected: hopeful here and there, and deeply vexed that they cannot be more hopeful."[28] By the same public standard, Bush has failed the conservative cause as well, but only if one adopts the view that the Reagan administration is the model for Bush to follow.

The Bush example would seem to point to a final conclusion. While the "bias trap" should make any observer hesitant to offer presidential "types," the preceding analysis does seem to suggest two broad approaches stemming from the influence of political beliefs on decision making. One approach, characterized by Nixon and Reagan, demonstrates that decisions can be shaped by "policy" beliefs, with little or no attention paid to procedure. On the other hand, Carter and Bush seem to suggest "process" beliefs may be considered more important to decision making than policy concerns. In this manner, their decisions on reorganization and budgeting will be markedly different from those of "policy" presidents.

While these are tentative categories at best, they do have certain implications for the study of presidential behavior. The "policy" presidents are likely to be misinterpreted by the "classic" models since those models are forced to assume certain goals exist and can only consider

---

[28]"Bush, At Home and Abroad," National Review XLIII (February 25, 1991): 15.

"rational" policy ends. Similarly, the "process" presidents are even more likely to be widely misunderstood, since their goals lie completely outside the realm of these "classic" models. In either case, the discipline will be unable to explain those decisions.

Reconsideration of the three models presented in Chapter One reaffirms this point. The "rational decider" model, given its assumption of the beliefs of the decider, can only provide explanations of behavior based upon the outcome of the decision. By this standard, Nixon's decision to reorganize the executive branch to gain political control for the purposes of decentralization is "irrational," as are his persistent efforts to enact and expand revenue sharing. Carter's preference for a "bottom-up" strategy is "irrational," since it undermines Carter's ability to make reorganization work. Similarly, Carter's use of zero base budgeting is an "irrational" fragmentation of his presidential power to make budget reform work. Reagan's determination to enact his budget goals through the use of an executive branch which has been "reorganized from within," even as those actions undermine his ability to maintain those reforms or his governing coalition, is "irrational" by Neustadt's standards as well.

The "personality" model suffers from similar shortcomings, based upon its presumptions. To classify each president, Barber must assume the character of the presi-

dent by reading into the policy outcomes of each decision. By this standard, Nixon's personality should have led him to covet power for its own sake, "naturally" leading to the Watergate affair. However, Barber's analysis misses Nixon's goals for his centralization of power and revenue sharing, and reasoning backward from that centralization leads Barber to conclusions which ignore those goals. Similarly, Carter's decisions to pursue reorganization through a "bottom-up" strategy and to create zero base budgeting assumes each action was a policy end in itself, part of an "active-positive" character. When those decisions began to undermine the policies themselves, Barber's analysis cannot adequately account for Carter's determination to stand by both decisions. Reagan's character cannot explain his decisions to politicize the executive branch and pursue budget success through politically destructive means, as Chapter Four concluded.

An examination of the "belief"model, however, helped to better explain these decisions. Nixon's decision to centralize government and pursue revenue sharing makes better sense when one considers Nixon's belief that individual power is (or, in terms of federalism, local and state government are) fundamental to the health of American political society. Carter's determination to continue "bottom-up" reorganization and zero base budgeting is better explained when one takes into account Carter's belief in government as an agent of communication in a

democratic society. Reagan's decision to reorganize "from within" and to pursue budget reform makes better sense when one considers Reagan's belief in government as an agency for social change, but only after government itself is retooled for that change.

While the "classic" models offer plausible explanations for presidential behavior, they cannot offer complete accounts of all behavior. The examples in this study demonstrate the importance of understanding political beliefs for decision making in different contexts and in different presidencies. Certainly political actors take actions, in some measure, on the basis of sincerely held political beliefs about the role of government in shaping the public good. Theoretical schemes which attempt to understand those beliefs through pre-determined categories of ideology, or through deterministic understandings of belief like Marxism, may dismiss the importance of these beliefs for political action. But this study demonstrates the importance of those beliefs for guiding action, and ignoring those beliefs will prevent any scholar of presidential behavior from truly understanding presidential decision making.

The effect of political beliefs on decision making may be difficult to demonstrate with direct evidence, but their effect can be seen in a variety of situations. While beliefs may not be consistent enough (or widely held) to constitute a true ideology, and while all beliefs

must be shaped by the larger context of American political thought, it would be a mistake to dismiss belief as an important element in decision making. Beliefs do not always play the sole role in determining decisions, and may sometimes play an unimportant role. However, at times, an appreciation of political beliefs is crucial for understanding why and how presidents decide.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aberbach, Joel and Bert Rockman. "Clashing Beliefs Within the Executive Branch: The Nixon Administration Bureaucracy." American Political Science Review LXX (June 1976): 456-468.

Abrahamsen, David. Nixon Versus Nixon: An Emotional Tragedy. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1976.

Althusser, Louis. For Marx. New York: Vintage Books, 1970.

Ambrose, Stephen. Nixon: The Triumph of a Politician: 1962-1972. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

Anderson, Charles. "The Place of Principles in Policy Analysis." American Political Science Review 73 (September 1979): 711-723.

Anderson, Martin. Revolution. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1988.

Appleby, Paul. Policy and Administration. Birmingham: University of Alabama Press, 1949.

Arnold, Peri. Making the Managerial Presidency. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986.

Aronowitz, Stanley. Science as Power: Discourse and Ideology in Modern Society. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988.

Axelrod, Donald. Budgeting for Modern Government. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Babunakis, Michael. Budget Reform for Government. Westport: Quorum Books: 1982.

Baer, Donald. "A White House of Many Mansions." U.S. News and World Report 106 (January 23, 1989): 14-7.

Barber, James David. Presidential Character. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1985.

Barnard, Chester. The Functions of the Executive. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938.

Barnes, Fred. "Four Bore Years." New Republic 200 (March 27, 1989): 12-14.

Barrett, Laurence. Gambling With History. New York: Penguin Books, 1983.

Barth, Hans. Truth and Ideology. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Bauman, Zygmunt. Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Beam, David. "Public Administration is Alive and Well - and Living in the White House." Public Administration Review 38 (January/February 1978): 72-77.

Bell, Daniel. The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties. New York: The Free Press, 1965.

Benze, James Jr.. Presidential Power and Management Techniques. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Berman, Larry. The New American Presidency. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987.

Bernstein, Marver. The Job of the Federal Executive. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1958.

Bluhm, William. Ideology and Attitudes. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Bonafede, Dom. "President Nixon's Executive Reorganization Plans Prompt Praise and Criticism." National Journal 5 (March 10, 1973): 329-40.

-----. "White House Reorganization - Separating Smoke From Substance." National Journal 9 (August 20, 1977): 1307-1311.

Borhek, James and Richard Curtis. A Sociology of Belief. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

Bowles, Nigel. The White House and Capital Hill. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Brauer, Carl. Presidential Transitions. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Bross, Irwin. Design for Decision. New York: MacMillan and Company, 1953.

Brownlow, Louis. The President and the Presidency. Chicago: Public Administration Service, 1949.

Burke, John. "The Institutional Presidency." The Presidency and the Political System. Ed. Michael Nelson, 2nd. ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988: 355-377.

Burns, James MacGregor. The Deadlock of Democracy. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1963.

-----. Presidential Government. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965.

"Bush, At Home and Abroad." National Review XLIII (February 25, 1991): 15-6.

Bush, George with Victor Gold. Looking Forward. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

Cabinets and Counselors. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1989.

Calvert, Randall. "The Value of Biased Information: A Rational Choice Model of Political Advice." Journal of Politics 47 (May 1985): 530-555.

Campbell, Angus, Phillip Converse, Warren Miller and Donald Stokes. The American Voter. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1960.

Campbell, Colin. Managing the Presidency. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986.

Candidates 1980. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980.

Cannon, Lou. President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime. New York: Putnam and Sons, 1991.

-----. Reagan. New York: Putnam and Sons, 1982.

Carey, William. "Presidential Staffing in the Sixties and Seventies." Public Administration Review XXIX (September/October 1969): 450-58.

-----. "Reorganization Plan No. 2." Public Administration Review 30 (November/December 1970): 631-34.

Carisnaes, Walter. The Concept of Ideology and Political Analysis. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981.

"Carter Promises White House Reorganization." National Journal 9 (July 23, 1977): 1165.

Carter, Jimmy. A Government As Good As Its People. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1977.

-----. Keeping Faith. New York: Bantam Books, 1982.

-----. Why Not the Best? Nashville: Boardman, 1975.

-----. "Zero-Base Budgeting." Zero Base Budgeting Comes of Age. Ed. Logan Creek. New York: AMACOM, 1977: 296-303.

Ceaser, James. "The Theory of Governance of the Reagan Administration." The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America. Eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984: 57-87.

Chamberlain, Lawrence. The President, Congress and Legislation. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946.

The Clearest Choice. Committee to Re-Elect the President, 1972.

Colby, William. "The President and National Security." The American Presidency: Principles and Problems. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982.

Conley, Jean and Joel Havemann. "Reorganization - Two Plans, One Department Down, Much More to Come." National Journal 9 (December 3, 1977): 1872-76.

Connolly, William. Political Science and Ideology. New York: Atherton Press, 1967.

-----. The Terms of Political Discourse. Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1974.

Converse, Philip. "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Politics." Ideology and Discontent. New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964.

Cousins, Mark and Athar Hussain. "The Question of Ideology: Althusser, Pecheux and Foucault." Power, Action and Belief: A New Sociology of Knowledge? Ed. John Law. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.

Crawford, John. "Budget Standoffs Characterize the Reagan Years." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 45 (October 24, 1987): 2572.

Crenson, Matthew and Francis Rourke. "By Way of Conclusion: American Bureaucracy Since World War II." The New American State. Ed. Louis Galambos. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.

Dallek, Robert. Ronald Reagan: The Politics of Symbolism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Dempsey, John. "Carter's Reorganization: A Midterm Appraisal." Public Administration Review 39 (January/February 1979): 74-86.

DeParle, Jason. "Point Man in Battle for GOP's Soul Doesn't Worry About Drawing Fire." New York Times (December 18, 1990): B12.

Dill, William. "Administrative Decision Making." Concepts and Issues in Administrative Behavior. Eds. Sidney Mailick and Edward Van Ness. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962: 29-48.

Dodd, Lawrence, and Richard Schott. Congress and the Administrative State. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1979.

Dommel, Paul. The Politics of Revenue Sharing. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974.

Dowd, Anne Riley. "How George Bush Manages the Presidency." Fortune 112 (August 27, 1990): 68-75.

Downs, Anthony. "A Theory of Bureaucracy." American Economic Review LV (May 1965): 439-446.

Draper, Frank and Bernard Pitsvada. "ZBB - Looking Back After Ten Years." Public Administration Review 41 (January/February 1981): 76-83.

Draper, Theodore. A Very Thin Line. New York: Hill and Wang, 1991.

Drew, Elizabeth. American Journal. New York: Random House, 1977.

Dror, Yehezkel. "Muddling Through -'Science' or Inertia?" Public Administration Review XXIV (September 1964): 153-57.

Duffy, Michael. "A Case of Doing Nothing." Time 137 (January 7, 1991): 28-31.

Dunsire, Andrew, Christopher Hood and Meg Huby. Cutback Management in Public Bureaucracies. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Editorials on File 2 (January 16-31, 1971): 76-81.

Ehrlichman, John. Witness to Power. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Elving, Ronald. "House Service Set Course for New President." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 47 (January 14, 1989): 55-7.

The End Of Ideology Debate. Ed. Chaim Waxman. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1968.

Erickson, Paul. Reagan Speaks. New York: New York University Press, 1985.

Eulau, Heinz. The Behavioral Persuasion in Politics. New York: Random House, 1963.

-----. Politics, Self and Society. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Evans, Rowland and Robert Novak. Nixon in the White House: The Frustration of Power. New York: Random House, 1971.

"Executive Reorganization Powers: Action to Date in the 95th Congress." Congressional Digest 56 (April 1977): 106-7.

Finer, Herman. The Presidency: Crisis and Regeneration. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974.

Fink, Garry. Prelude to the Presidency. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1980.

Fishel, Jeff. Presidents and Promises. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1985.

Fisher, Louis. The Politics of Shared Power: Congress and the Executive. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1981.

-----. President and Congress. New York: Free Press, 1972.

Foucault: A Critical Reader. Ed. David Couzens Hoy. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986.

Foucault, Michel. Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

-----. The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction. New York: Vintage Books, 1980.

Fox, Douglas. "The President's Proposals for Executive Reorganization: A Critique." Public Administration Quarterly 33 (September/October 1973): 401-6.

Franck, Thomas and Edward Weisband. Foreign Policy by Congress. New York: Oxford Press, 1979.

Frankel, Joseph. The Making of Foreign Policy. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Garnett, James. "Operationalizing the Constitution Via Administrative Reorganization: Oilcans, Trends and Proverbs." Public Administration Review 47 (January/February 1987): 35-44.

Germond, Jack and Jules Witcover. Wake Us When It's Over. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1985.

Glad, Betty. Jimmy Carter. New York: W.W. Norton, 1980.

Goldenberg, Edie. "The Permanent Government in an Era of Retrenchment and Redirection." The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America. Eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984: 381-413.

Goodnow, Frank. Politics and Administration: A Study in Government. New York: MacMillan and Company, 1900.

Gormley, William. Taming the Bureaucracy. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Graber, Doris. "Executive Decision Making." Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science 34 (1982): 76-87.

Greider, William. "The Education of David Stockman." Atlantic 248 (December 1981): 27-54.

Griffith, Ernest. The American Presidency: The Dilemmas of Shared Power and Divided Government. New York: New York UniversityPress, 1976.

Haider, Donald. "Zero-Base; Federal Style." Public Administration Review 37 (July/August 1977): 400-7.

Halle, Louis J. The Ideological Imagination. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972.

Haremann, Judith. "Reagan Regime Lives on Through Appointees Alumni Groups." Washington Post (August 25, 1989): A19.

Hartman, Robert. "Congress and Budget-Making." Political Science Quarterly 97 (Fall 1982): 381-402.

Havemann, Joel. "The Budget - A Tax Cut, Little Else." National Journal 10 (January 28, 1978): 124-32.

-----. "Carter's Plans for Reorganization Get Mixed Reception." National Journal 9 (February 12, 1977).

-----. "Carter's Reorganization Plans - Scrambling For Turf." National Journal 10 (May 20, 1978): 788-94.

-----. "Reorganization - How Clean Can Carter's Broom Sweep?" National Journal 9 (January 1, 1977): 4-8.

-----. "Taking Up the Tools to Tame the Bureaucracy." National Journal 9 (April 2, 1977): 514-17.

-----. "The Tale of How One Agency Used ZBB - And Lived to Tell About It." National Journal 10 (February 18, 1978): 265-69.

Heclo, Hugh. A Government of Strangers. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977.

Heclo, Hugh and Rudolph Penner. "Fiscal and Political Strategy in the Reagan Administration." The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment. Ed. Fred Greenstein. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1982: 21-47.

Hess, Stephen. Organizing the Presidency. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1976.

Hikel, Gerald. Beyond the Polls. Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1973.

Hilsman, Roger. "Congressional-Executive Relations and the Foreign Policy Consensus." American Political Science Review 52 (1978).

Hoadley, John. "Easy Riders: Gramm-Rudman-Hollings and the Legislative Fast Track." PS 19 (Winter 1986): 30-36.

Hoff-Wilson, Joan. "Richard M. Nixon: The Corporate Presidency." Leadership in the Modern Presidency. Ed. Fred Greenstein. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Ifill, Gwen. "Restless Conservative Debate Future." Washington Post (December 24, 1990): A3.

Ingraham, Patricia. "Building Bridges or Burning Them? The President, the Appointees and the Bureaucracy." Public Administration Review 47 (September/October 1987): 425-435.

Ink, Dwight. "President Nixon's Proposals for Executive Reorganization: A Mini-Symposium." Public Administration Review 34 (September/October, 1974).

Ink, Dwight and Alan Dean. "A Concept of Decentralization." Public Administration Review 30 (January/February 1970): 60-3.

"It's A Long Way to October." Economist 274 (February 2, 1980): 29-30.

"I've Been Underestimated." Time 132 (August 22, 1988): 20-1.

Johnson, Haynes. In the Absence of Power. New York: Viking Press, 1980.

-----. Sleepwalking Through History. New York: W.W. Norton, 1991.

Jones, Charles. The Trusteeship Presidency. Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1988.

Kellerman, Barbara. The Political Presidency. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Keogh, James. This is Nixon. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1956.

Kirkpatrick, Samuel, Dwight Davis and Roby Robinson. "The Process of Political Decision Making in Groups." American Behavioral Scientists 20 (September/October 1976): 33-64.

Klein, Herbert. Making It Perfectly Clear. Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1980.

Knott, Jack and Gary Miller. Reforming Bureaucracy: The Politics of Institutional Change. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1987.

Knott, Jack and Aaron Wildavsky. "Jimmy Carter's Theory of Governing." The Wilson Quarterly (Winter 1977).

Koenig, Louis. The Chief Executive. Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964.

Koven, Stephen. Ideological Budgeting: The Influence of Political Philosophy on Public Policy. New York: Praeger, 1988.

Krauthammer, Charles. "The Great Cooperator." Washington Post (October 19, 1990): A23.

Krieger, Joel. Reagan, Thatcher and the Politics of Decline. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Ladd, Everett. The American Polity. New York: W.W. Norton, 1987.

Lane, Robert. Political Ideology. New York: Free Press, 1962.

-----. Political Thinking and Consciousness. Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1969.

Lasswell, Harold. Power and Personality. New York: Viking Press, 1948.

-----. "Current Studies of the Decision Process." Western Political Quarterly VIII (September 1955): 381-399.

Lauth, Thomas. "Zero-Base Budgeting in Georgia State Government: Myth and Reality." Public Administration Review 38 (September/October 1978): 420-30.

Lemert, Charles and Garth Gillan. Michel Foucault: Social Theory and Transgression. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Leoni, Bruno. "The Meaning of 'Political' in Political Decisions." Political Studies. 3 (October 1957): 225-39.

Lerner, Allan. The Politics of Decision Making: Strategy, Cooperation and Conflict. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1976.

Light, Paul. The President's Agenda. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.

Lindblom, Charles. "The Science of 'Muddling Through'." Public Administration Review XIX (Spring 1959): 79-88.

Loewenstein, Karl. "Political Systems, Ideologies and Institutions: The Problem of Their Circulation." Western Political Quarterly VI (December 1953): 689-706.

Lynn, Lawrence. Managing Public Policy. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987.

-----. "The Reagan Administration and the Renitent Bureaucracy." The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America. Eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984: 339-70.

Malbin, Michael. Unelected Representatives. New York: Basic Books, 1980.

Mankiewicz, Frank. Perfectly Clear: Nixon From Whittier to Watergate. New York: Quadrangle `Press, 1973.

Mannheim, Karl. Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1936.

Mansfield, Harvey C., Jr.. Congress Against the President. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1975.

March, James and John Olson. "Organizing Political Life: What Administrative Reorganization Tells Us About Government." American Political Science Review 77 (June 1983): 281-96.

Marrow, Alfred. Behind the Executive Mask. New York: American Management Association, 1964.

Mazlish, Bruce and Edwin Diamond. Jimmy Carter: A Character Portrait. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979.

Mazo, Earl. Richard Nixon: A Political and Personal Portrait. New York: Harper and Row, 1959.

Mazo, Earl and Stephen Hess. Nixon: A Political Portrait. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

McCamy, James. "Analysis of the Process of Decision-Making." Public Administration Review VII (Winter, 1947): 41-8.

Meltsner, Arnold. Policy Analysts in the Bureaucracy. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

Miles, Rufus. "Considerations for a President Bent on Reorganization." Public Administration Review 37 (March/April 1977): 155-62.

Millett, John. Government and Public Administration. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959.

Minar, David. "Ideology and Political Behavior." Midwest Journal of Political Science V (November 1961): 318-30.

Minarik, Joseph and Rudolph Penner. "Fiscal Choices." Challenge to Leadership. Ed. Isabel Sawhill. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute Press, 1988: 279-316.

Minoque, Kenneth. Alien Powers: The Pure Theory of Ideology. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985.

Moe, Ronald. "Traditional Organizational Principles and the Managerial Presidency: From Phoenix to Ashes." Public Administration Review 50 (January/February 1991): 129-40.

Moe, Terry. "Regulatory Performance and Presidential Administration." American Journal of Political Science 26 (May 1982): 197-224.

Mullins, Kerry and Aaron Wildavsky. "The Procedural Presidency of George Bush." Society 28 (January/February 1991): 49-59.

Nathan, Richard. The Plot That Failed: Nixon and the Administrative Presidency. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

-----. "The Reagan Presidency in Domestic Affairs." The Reagan Presidency: An Early Assessment. Ed. Fred Greenstein. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982: 48-81.

Nathan, Richard, Allen Manvel and Susannah Calkins. Monitoring Revenue Sharing. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1975.

Neustadt, Richard. Presidential Power. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1980.

-----. Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents. New York: Free Press, 1990.

Newland, Chester. "A Mid-Term Appraisal - The Reagan Presidency: Limited Government and Political Administration." Public Administration Review 3 (January/February 1983): 45-56.

Nixon: The First Year of His Presidency. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1970.

The Nixon Presidential Press Conferences. London: Heyden Press, 1978.

Nixon, Richard. In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat and Renewal. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.

-----. RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.

Noonan, Peggy. What I Saw at the Revolution. New York: Ivy Books, 1990.

Ogden, Daniel Jr.. "Beyond Zero Based Budgeting." Public Administration Review 38 (November/December 1978): 528-29.

Osborne, John. The Second Year of the Nixon Watch. New York: Liveright Press, 1971.

Parmet, Herbert. Richard Nixon and His America. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990.

Pascal, Glenn. The Trillion Dollar Budget. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985.

Peters, Jean. "Reconciliation 1982: What Happened?" PS XIV (Fall 1981): 732-36.

Pettigrew, Richard. "Improving Government Competence." Publius 8 (Spring 1978): 98-107.

Pfiffner, James. "Establishing the Bush Presidency." Public Administration Review 50 (January/February 1990): 64-73.

-----. "Political Appointees and Career Executives: The Democracy-Bureaucracy Nexus in the Third Century." Public Administration Review 47 (January/February 1987): 57-65.

Phyrr, Peter. "The Zero-Base Approach to Government Budgeting." Public Administration Review 37 (January/February 1977): 1-8.

-----. "Zero-Base Budgeting." Harvard Business Review 49 (November/December 1970): 111-21.

-----. Zero Base Budgeting. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1973.

Plamenatz, John. Ideology. New York: Praeger, 1970.

Polsby, Nelson. Congress and the President. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1976.

-----. "Presidential Cabinet Making: Lessons for the Political System." Political Science Quarterly 93 (Spring 1978): 15-25.

Porter, David and Eugene Olsen. "Some Critical Issues in Government Centralization and Decentralization." Public Administration Review 36 (January/February 1976): 72-84.

Presidency 1977. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1978.

President Carter, 1978. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1979.

Presidential Campaign, 1976. I. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1978.

-----. III. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1979.

Price, Ray. With Nixon. New York: Viking Press, 1977.

Public Administration and Policy Development. Ed. Harold Stein. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1952.

Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter, 1977. I. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1977.

Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Jimmy Carter. II. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1978.

Rajchman, John. Michel Foucault: The Freedom of Philosophy. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.

Rather, Dan and Gary Paul Gates. The Palace Guard. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

"Reading Reagan." Economist 286 (26March-1April 1983): 21.

"Ready to Go." National Review XLI (January 27, 1989): 15.

Reagan, Michael. The New Federalism. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Reagan, Ronald. An American Life. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990.

Reagan's First Year. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1982.

"Recent Major Action in the Congress." Congressional Digest 56 (May 1977): 129-30.

Rector, Robert and Michael Sanera. "The Reagan Presidency and Policy Change." Steering the Elephant: How Washington Works. Eds. Robert Rector and Michael Sanera. New York: Universe Books, 1987, 328-349.

Redford, Emmette and Marian, Blissett. Organizing the Executive Branch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

Reichley, A. James. "The Conservative Roots of the Nixon, Ford and Reagan Administration." Political Science Quarterly 96 (Winter 1981-2): 537-550.

-----. Conservatives in an Age of Change. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1981.

"Reorganization Plan of 1970." Public Administration Review 30 (November/December 1970): 611-19.

Richard M. Nixon. Ed. Howard Bremer. Dobbs Ferry: Oceana Publications, 1975.

Ries, John. Executives in the American Political System. Belmont: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1969.

Riker, William and Peter Ordeshook. An Introduction to Positive Political Theory. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

Riley, Dennis. Controlling the Federal Bureaucracy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

Ripley, Randall and Grace Franklin. Congress, the Bureaucracy and Public Policy. Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1976.

Roberts, Paul. The Supply Side Revolution. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Robinson, James. Congress and Foreign Policy Making. Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1976.

Rokeach, Milton. The Open and Closed Mind. New York: Basic Books, 1960.

Rourke, Francis. "Grappling With the Bureaucracy." Politics and the Oval Office: Towards Presidential Governance. Ed. Arnold Meltsner. San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1981: 123-140.

Safire, William. Before the Fall. New York: Ballantine Books, 1977.

Salamon, Lester and Alan Abramson. "Governance - The Politics of Retrenchment." The Reagan Record. Eds. John Palmer and Isabel Sawhill. Cambridge: Ballinger Publishing Company, 1984: 31-68.

Sanders, Elizabeth. "The Presidency and the Bureaucratic State." The Presidency and the Political System. Ed. Michael Nelson, 2nd ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988: 379-409.

Schick, Allen. "The Budget as an Instrument of Presidential Policy." The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America. Eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1984: 91-125.

-----. How the Budget Was Won and Lost." Presidents and Congress: Assessing Reagan's First Year. Ed. Norman Ornstein. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1982: 14-43.

-----. Reconciliation and the Congressional Budget Process. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1981.

-----. "The Road From ZBB." Public Administration Review 38 (March/April 1977): 177-80.

Schneider, Jerrold. Ideological Coalitions in Congress. Westport: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Schneider, William. "The In-Box President." Atlantic 265 (January 1990): 34-43.

Seidman, Harold and Robert Gilmour. Politics, Position and Power. 4th Ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Seliger, Martin. The Marxist Conception of Ideology. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Selznick, Phillip. Leadership in Administration. New York: Harper and Row, 1957.

Setting National Priorities: The 1978 Budget. Ed. Joseph Pechman. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1977.

Shogun, Robert. Promises to Keep. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1977.

Shuman, Howard. Politics and the Budget. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1988.

Simon, Herbert. Administrative Behavior: A Study of Decision-Making Processes in Administrative Organizations. New York: Free Press, 1957.

-----. The Sciences of the Artificial. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1981.

-----. The Shape of Automation for Men and Management. New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

Skowronek, Stephen. Building a New American State. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

-----. "Presidential Leadership in Political Time." The Presidency and the Political System. Ed. Michael Nelson, 2nd. ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988: 121-127.

Snowman, Daniel. "President Truman's Decision To Drop the First Atomic Bomb." Political Studies XIV (October 1966): 365-373.

Sorenson, Theodore. Decision Making in the White House. New York: Columbia University Press, 1953.

Steinbruner, John. The Cybernetic Theory of Decision. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Stockman, David. The Triumph of Politics. New York: Harper and Row, 1986.

Stoud, Kandy. How Jimmy Won. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1977.

Strong, Robert. "Richard Nixon Revisited." Virginia Quarterly Review 64 (Summer 1988): 525-34.

Szanton, Peter. Federal Reorganization: What Have We Learned? New York: Chatham House, 1981.

Tate, Dale. "Reconciliation Conferees Face Slim Choices." Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 39 (July 4, 1981): 1167-69.

Taylor, Graeme. "Introduction to Zero-Base Budgeting." Contemporary Approaches to Public Budgeting. Ed. Fred Kramer. Cambridge: Winthrop Publishers, 1979.

Tulis, Jeffrey. The Rhetorical Presidency. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987.

United States. Cong. Hearings Before A Subcommittee of the Committee on Government Operations. House of Representatives. Reorganization of Executive Departments: Part One. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1971.

United States. Cong. President's Committee on Administrative Management. Report of the Committee. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1937.

Vessel, Mark. "Zero-Base Budgeting: Setting National Priorities Through the Ranking Process." Public Administration Review 38 (November/December 1978): 524-27.

Voorhis, Jerry. The Strange Case of Richard Milhous Nixon. New York: Paul S. Eriksson, Inc., 1972.

Walsh, Kenneth. "Bush's First Quarter." U.S. News and World Report 106 (May 1, 1989): 24-7.

-----. "George Bush's Idea-Free Zone." U.S. News and World Report 110 (January 14, 1991): 34-5.

Watson, Richard and Norman Thomas. The Politics of the Presidency. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1988.

Wayne, Stephen. The Legislative Presidency. New York: Harper and Row, 1978.

Weatherford, M. Stephen and Lorraine McDonnel. "Ideology and Economic Policy." Looking Back on the Reagan Presidency. Ed. Larry Berman. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990: 122-155.

Whalen, Richard. Catch the Falling Flag. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972.

"What, Another Hoover Commission?" Public Administration Review XXVIII (March/April 1968): 168-78.

White, D.J. Decision Theory. Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969.

White, Theodore. The Making of the President: 1972. New York: Atheneum Publishers, 1973.

Wicker, Tom. One of Us. New York: Random House, 1991.

Wildavsky, Aaron. "If You Can't Budget, How Can You Govern?" Thinking About America: The United States in the 1990's. Eds. Annelise Anderson and Dennis Bark. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1988.

Wildavsky, Aaron and Arthur Hammond. "Comprehensive Versus Incremental Budgeting in the Department of Agriculture." Administrative Science Quarterly 10 (May 1965): 321-46.

Wills, Garry. Reagan's America. Garden City: Doubleday, 1987.

Wilson, Woodrow. "The Study of Administration." Rpt. in Political Science Quarterly LVI (4): 481-506.

Witcover, Jules. Marathon. New York: Viking Press, 1977.

Woley, Joseph. Zero-Base Budgeting and Program Evaluation. Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1978.

Wolman, Harold and Fred Teitelbaum. "Interest Groups and the Reagan Presidency." The Reagan Presidency and the Governing of America. Eds. Lester Salamon and Michael Lund. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1984: 297-329.

Woodward, Bob. The Commanders. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991.

Wyszomirski, Margaret Jane. "The De-Institutionalization of Presidential Staff Agencies." Public Administration Review 42 (September/October, 1982): 448-58.

"The Zero Base Approach to Government Budgeting." Public Administration Review 37 (January/February 1977): 1-8.

Presidential Libraries

Richard Nixon Library, Washington D.C..

Jimmy Carter Library, Atlanta, Georgia.